




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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MOTION

Business Program

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (11.23 am): It is always interesting to hear those in government complain about the order of the House and how it is very important to silence the opposition to make sure that debate is curtailed and that members do not get the opportunity to represent their electorates. I find it fascinating because I sat in the parliament here when there were only a few members on this side. It was interesting to hear the debate then. We never curtailed debate.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. The minister will cease his interjections.

Mr WATTS: It is fascinating to me to hear that all of a sudden the orderliness of parliament and being expedient with our time is critically important. What we have seen is fewer sitting weeks. What we have seen is fewer sitting hours. What we have seen is less work being done by the government. What we see is a lazy government. We see a government that does not want to debate the issues, that does not want to hear from the opposition and that does not want to hear the voices of the people of Queensland. They do not want to hear the voices of the people of Queensland—that is, members—coming into this place to debate legislation.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The member for Pine Rivers will cease her interjections. The member for Logan will cease his interjections.

Mr WATTS: Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would expect, they would like to hail me down. They would like me to be silent because the last thing they would like to hear is that there are other voices in Queensland that want to be heard in this place. There are members who were elected to this parliament who represent their communities well, who work very hard in their local communities and who sit on this side of the chamber. They might have an opposing opinion to that of the ministers and the government opposite. They would much rather not hear from them because they are arrogant. That is the problem. They are arrogant and they believe that they are deserving to rule without any dissension or debate. That is the problem.

We come into this chamber specifically to debate. We might not even finish debate within the time allowed but why curtail it? Why force it upon members in this House to not have their voices heard? There used to be a time when members would come to this chamber to make sure their communities' voices were heard. This government would like to see those voices silenced.

This business motion is a nonsense. They claim that it is about managing the parliament, yet we saw in the debate just last sitting week how many speakers from the other side were added to the speaking list when they were desperately running out of legislation. They did not have any more legislation ready to bring into this place, so they started adding speakers from the other side to pad out

the debate. I did not see any guillotine dropping on their own members. The speaking lists were put out. Then all of a sudden the next day there were more members on the speaking list. Then the next day there were more members on the speaking list.

I have absolutely no problem with all of those members choosing to speak, but it is interesting to me how the guillotine is dropped on our throat when it suits and then they filibuster when it suits—when this government has no legislative agenda, when it has no way forward for the people of Queensland, when it has no reason to stand in this place and talk. They want everyone to be silenced and to not have our voices heard, yet on other occasions when they have no legislation before the House ready because the ministers are lazy and unprepared and have no agenda for Queensland—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. The two ministers there will cease their interjections.

Mr WATTS: We see the lazy ministers come into this place with no legislative agenda for the people of Queensland—no real way forward. We have heard of the debacle—the absolute crisis—in the health department. If you come to my electorate, you will see the crisis not only with the hospital not being built but also with crime running out of control. We do not see any legislative agenda coming forward, yet they want to silence this opposition.

On the other hand, when it suits, they want to filibuster in this parliament. You cannot have it both ways. Either every debate is going to be curtailed and the government's own members will not be able to filibuster when it suits, when all of the ministers are off having a long lunch with a glass of red wine, or we can come into this House and debate until nobody is left who wants to jump to their feet. If people jump to their feet they should be heard and then you have respect for parliament. If you curtail people from jumping to their feet, ensuring that they cannot be heard by using your majority, then you have no respect for this parliament, no respect for democracy and no respect for the people who voted members to this place to have their voices heard.