



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 March 2024

## MOTIONS

### Dissent from Speaker's Ruling

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.48 pm): At the outset I would like to associate myself with the remarks made by my colleagues the members for Kawana and Clayfield. Like them, I convey my regard and respect for the position of Speaker as it has been held in parliaments throughout the Commonwealth, in particular, and of your service in that esteemed role, Mr Speaker. Like others, I note that, in moving dissent, we are doing so in an individual decision and in no way does that change my regard or respect for the role or your service in that role.

However, like the member for Kawana and the member for Clayfield, I do come to the issue of the particular ruling of an amendment out of order on the grounds of relevance under standing order 94. It is worth reiterating that the amendment sought to add a number of additional cost-of-living pressures to the terms of reference of the supermarket select committee, particularly around the impact of rising electricity prices on grocery costs, the impact of insurance prices on small and family businesses, and the impact of rising water costs on grocery prices.

I appreciate that relevance is a relatively subjective term. One person may consider relevance in a matter and another may not. Even big supermarkets pay for electricity. Even big supermarkets pay for insurance. Even big supermarkets pay water bills. They pass those costs on to customers through the prices of their groceries and products. Similarly in terms of relevance, the producers of the products that supermarkets sell pay electricity bills. They pay insurance premiums. They pay water bills. Those costs form part of the price negotiated with the supermarkets and, ultimately, they are passed on to the shopper. I appreciate that relevance may well be a subjective term, but I determine that, in this instance, issues such as electricity, insurance and water are incredibly relevant to any select committee's consideration and terms of reference designed to pursue, unearth and investigate supermarket prices.

Others have already pointed out references in *Erskine May*. I would like to point to New Zealand practice where, as a general rule, it may be said that amendments are relevant and as such admissible if they are on the same subject matter as the original motion. I contend that, as I have just identified, the efforts by the member for Toowoomba South to add those matters to the motion were well and truly admissible on the basis that they form part of the same subject matter as the original motion. That was the original decision.

As was later determined and referenced at pages 581 and 582 of *Hansard*, Mr Speaker came back in to determine that the amendment was also ruled out of order on the grounds that it was not legible or intelligible; that new terms of reference were being inserted after powers and membership and not with other terms of reference; and that the amendment was not relevant to the original motion and the proposed terms of reference. That latter matter returns to the original ruling around relevance; the first two matters do not.

On those matters, as was raised by the member for Clayfield, we had been given notice by the Premier that he would be moving a motion of this nature to establish a select committee. We acknowledged that there was certainly benefit in pursuing supermarkets on their grocery prices, but we also made it very clear, very early on, that we intended to ensure any such motion was amended to include a number of other matters—as I have just mentioned: electricity, insurance and water—under the bailiwick of the state government. We tried to work collaboratively with the government to ensure there was a motion that both sides of this chamber could agree to. That was not afforded us. We were not given the opportunity to see the motion, as the member for Clayfield pointed out. Therefore, I do acknowledge the amendment as it was moved on the spur of the moment may not have been accurate. As the member for Clayfield also pointed out, that verbal amendment, given on the fly, was a contribution to ensure that we could expand the original motion.

I appreciate that it is not Mr Speaker's responsibility to determine that the government sit down with the opposition and negotiate these things beforehand or, indeed, that the government give notice or provide earlier advice to the opposition. However, I provide that information on the basis that it is the mitigating circumstances with which the members of the opposition tried to amend that original motion.

I finish where I started: I respect and regard both the position and your service in this role, Mr Speaker. Moving dissent is not an easy decision but, in this instance, whilst relevance is a subjective matter, we believe that relevance was well and truly identified in the amendment that was put by the member for Toowoomba South. We believe it should have been accepted, it should have been put to the parliament for a vote and it was for the parliament to determine whether it became part of an amended motion, not to be ruled out of order.