



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2024

**MOTION**

**Amendments to Sessional Orders**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.33 pm): We were just debating whether the saying is more front than a London high street or more front than Myer or David Jones, to use the Australian colloquialism. My goodness! How the Leader of the House could come in here and, with a straight face, deliver that speech is completely and utterly beyond me.

When it comes to youth crime, we knew that the Labor government's policy cupboard was bare but we did not know that it was so bare. Now we can add to the long list of LNP policies that the Labor government has included. Let me run through a few: criminalising breach of bail; reducing learner licence fees; establishing a clearing house for complaints; putting a victim of crime on the sentencing advisory panel; delaying renters tax; parking the patients tax; establishing the original DNA lab inquiry; reopening the DNA lab inquiry; establishing the Caboolture Hospital inquiry; establishing an independent review into the treatment of Kaleb and Jonathan—the child safety matter; developing a Queensland Health workforce plan; opening up the Children's Court to families of victims and the media, which is in progress, mind you; providing police helicopters in Townsville; freezing car rego; establishing an independent Olympic infrastructure delivery authority; and, now, restoring a level of balance, although it is not perfect, to the amount of debate that occurs in this chamber.

The Leader of the House used the term 'flip-flopping'. Let me give members in this chamber and people in the state more broadly a history lesson on what we are debating here tonight. I will go back to the start of this political term—I think it was November 2020. The then leader of the house moved the sessional orders that we are now overthrowing. She used these words—

These fixed hours are sensible and have brought the Queensland parliament into the 21st century and aligned it with modern workplaces, including parliaments right across this country.

In addition, when referring to the Business Committee and the business program process, the then leader of the house, the member for Redcliffe, said—

This great change in the last parliament has assisted the efficient running of the chamber while ensuring members can continue to have their say on the matters that are important to them. The system can only work if all members buy into the process and work with the process.

She concluded—

The cornerstone of our democracy is the ability to debate ideas and challenge different policy proposals.

I contest that it is for those exact reasons that we are here today changing what the then leader of the house established in sessional orders. Why? Because every single time the current Leader of the House has come in here and moved his business program, he has been earbashed about the fact that guillotining debate is impacting the ability of not only members of the opposition but also the

crossbench to contribute to debate on legislation. The Leader of the House has well and truly heard it from the likes of the member for Noosa, and I suspect he has also heard it from his own members who are sick and tired of having their contributions on important legislation guillotined.

I mentioned flip-flopping and I mentioned the fact that this was LNP policy. I actually put this forward on Friday, 1 March and it was reported by the ABC online. We put forward that we would not sit around the clock, like we have in the past, but would have a better balance to ensure that we get the required debate and lessen the guillotining of debate that we currently get from the state Labor government. When asked whether he agreed, the government's Leader of the House, Mick de Brenni, stood by the existing arrangements. He stood by the existing arrangements as little as 2½ months ago.

The ABC and other media outlets have started reporting on the farcical situation in this session of parliament whereby bills are rammed through with very little contribution from any members in the House and the new addition whereby the minister is getting 15 minutes to sum up any consideration in detail. I acknowledge Steve Austin at the ABC for highlighting what has been occurring. I suspect it is like everything else we see with this Labor government: they only respond when they get negative media and that is why we are considering these sessional orders. The Leader of the House said that the Miles government will always support modern, progressive workplaces and that the Queensland parliament is no different. Does going back to where we were previously make us less modern and less progressive? It is interesting. I must admit that I have a little bit of a chuckle when I think that the Leader of the House is having to eat his words.

I also want to highlight, because the Leader of the House went there, that in yesterday's Business Committee he is right: I did vote against what was put, even though we are getting more debate time. I will add that the member for Noosa also voted against the business program that was put. It is not just about adding additional time; it is also about determining how many pieces of legislation the government is trying to ram through in the time that is determined. If I use those last two cognated bills as an example, I have it on a good undertaking from the Opposition Whip that only seven members of the opposition and crossbench got to contribute on two important pieces of legislation. In fact, the member for Mirani was on his feet when he got guillotined in his contribution on the debate. Do not come in here and say that just because there is additional time to debate the legislation it is all fixed. It is not. Those opposite are still cognating legislation—we have two lots of cognated debate this time—they are still guillotining the debate, and they are still setting arbitrary ministerial replies and consideration in detail.

**Mr McDonald:** It's undemocratic.

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. It continues to be undemocratic. As long as that exists, I will continue to vote against the business program, the LNP will continue to vote against the business program and, as members saw today, every member of the crossbench will vote against the business program.

I want to point out an interesting addition, and the Leader of the House alluded to this in his contribution. We all know what happens with the automatic adjournment—that at the specified time the adjournment is called and up to 10 speakers can speak for no more than three minutes each. However, two additional clauses have been added. The first states—

Notwithstanding Sessional Orders 1(b) and 2(2), the Leader or Acting Leader of the House may advise the House, no later than two hours before the scheduled or rescheduled Automatic Adjournment, that the House may continue to sit for a further stated period of up to 2 hours after the time set for the Automatic Adjournment or at the conclusion of a nominated item of business, whichever is earlier, at which time the Automatic Adjournment will occur.

In one essence, the Leader of the House is now giving himself a free pass to extend at will the amount of time we sit. Fair enough: that may actually give us more time to have debates on important pieces of legislation. As I have said, we here in the opposition stand ready and waiting to debate as long as those opposite want to. We have never considered those sessional orders that have been in operation until today to be family friendly. Very few of us have an opportunity to duck home to see our families of an evening. However, there is an additional item added to this which states—

Notwithstanding Sessional Orders 1(b) and 2(2), the motion 'That the House do now adjourn' may be moved by the Leader or Acting Leader of the House at any time despite the order of business, in which case there will be an Adjournment Debate for 30 minutes and then the question shall be put.

On the flip side, he has hedged his bet the other way. He can just decide that we are not going to sit until nine o'clock any night and we are going to pull up stumps early. They are going to knock off and they can all go to their P&C meetings et cetera. He is having a bet each way, which goes to show that those opposite treat this House, this chamber, as their political plaything. They have no interest in ensuring democratic parliamentary contributions. They want to make sure that they control anything that is coming out of this House because they have lost control of the state. It is the only place they can continue to have any level of control because they have the numbers in here. Outside of this chamber,

it is chaos and crisis and it will continue to be like that for as long as those opposite are in charge of the government. The people of Queensland have one opportunity in October, and that opportunity is to show Labor the door in '24.