




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 17 April 2024

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.38 pm): As a former leader of the House, I have never seen the democracy of this House hijacked by the current Leader of the House in this fashion to suit their own political ends and take away the rights of members, particularly the opposition members, to have their say on committee proceedings.

We all know that standing order 211 precludes any dissemination of particular proceedings of those committee meetings. We get this ridiculous motion before the House that basically says, 'That's okay as long as we can tell a story about what we want to tell.' In terms of committee reporting, the idea of portfolio committees is that they give a balanced view and it gives opposition members as well as government members their say in portfolio committees.

In my time here since the new portfolio system was brought in in 2011, I have never seen this parliament being hijacked by the Leader of the House in this particular fashion. The amendment moved by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is at least a fair and reasonable outcome for this surprise motion we have before the House. I am not aware about leaking to the media and those sorts of matters. What I am saying is that the motion that the Leader of the House has moved is totally unreasonable, unfair and undemocratic. It will basically muzzle any other opinion apart from what the government wants to send out to the people of Queensland on youth justice. That is not fair and reasonable.

Our role here, as well as the media's role, is to hold the government to account. If there are matters that should be brought forward, I think the member for Lockyer would be able to do that in a reasonable capacity if the amendment that the deputy leader has reasonably put forward to this surprise motion is passed. The Leader of the House is trying to undermine the portfolio committee system. It will be interesting to see what other motions we see in relation to the Cost of Living and Economics Committee coming up shortly. I have not seen anything like this. It is a desperate government trying to overcome its lack of action in relation to youth justice. That is why they are putting forward this one-sided argument out there to the media and the Queensland public, without any opportunity for a different view to be put out.

In all fairness and reasonableness, the amendment moved by the deputy leader is fair and appropriate, and it would at least uphold some level of decency and democracy in terms of this particular motion before the House. I cannot understand why the Leader of the House would do this without any consultation—well, I can really. I am not even aware if the good members who are allocated to talk are aware of the job they need to do in spruiking the government's message on youth crime.

Ms BOLTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask the member to retract that statement.

Mr STEVENS: I did not mention any names.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Mermaid Beach, I am quite capable of ruling on this point of order without your assistance. Member for Noosa, there was no reference to you personally. There is no point of order.

Mr STEVENS: I will move on from the listed speakers under the current motion. Obviously, I believe the Leader of the House would have made them aware of their job to do on his behalf. Certainly, the member for Cooper, as the other speaker involved in this particularly bad outcome for the democracy of this House, would be aware of her calling in relation to this youth justice message. This motion is totally unreasonable and unfair in its current form. There has been a reasonable alternative put forward by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am sure the member for Lockyer can deliver a version so the people of Queensland and the media can determine for themselves the true progress and the outcomes of the youth justice committee.

Every electorate is very concerned about youth justice. Mermaid Beach is in this up to its eyeballs. I am sure right throughout this House that youth justice is a major issue. This motion is all about saying what the portfolio committee delivered about youth justice. In the interests of fairness and reasonableness, the member for Lockyer should be given an opportunity to present his view on the matter, according to the amendment moved by the deputy leader.