



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 12 August 2020

MOTION

Order of Business

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.32 am): I rise to oppose this dreadful, undemocratic and completely unnecessary motion moved by the leader of the House to suspend committee report debate not only this sitting week but also in our final sitting week. I want to pick up on some of the comments made by the member for Kawana. If we have to sacrifice one hour of debate this week, and one hour of debate next week, then there are plenty of opportunities to amend the time we sit, including our lunch breaks, to accommodate that one hour.

In 2009 when I was first elected and joined this chamber it was not uncommon for us to sit late into the evening, even into the early morning of the subsequent day. In fact, there was one sitting in 2009 I recall, a Friday night of a budget sitting, when we sat until four o'clock on the Saturday morning. There is nothing stopping us from doing that again. If there is so much legislation that this government need to get done such that they need to suspend committee reports, then we can obviously extend the hours of parliament. We used to do it. We have done it every session until this Labor government.

Instead of changing the hours that we sit, changing the hours of debate, what have we seen? A business program motion moved on the Tuesday of every sitting week that curtails the amount of time that we can speak on the bill—guillotines it—regardless of whether it is a Labor, crossbench or LNP member on their feet.

Ms Grace: Now you are wasting time.

Mr POWELL: Now we are wasting time?

Ms Grace: Yes, you are.

Mr POWELL: Again, if you had left the committee reports we could have saved having this debate and had that debate. The member for Kawana asked what we are missing out on. Quite a few things. Some members on this side of the House have been waiting in some instances five years to debate these issues.

Many of these issues are relevant to the constituents of Glass House and, indeed, across Queensland. Take, for instance, the one we are in the middle of debating at moment, the inquiry into the impacts of invasive weeds and their control in Queensland. As a result of this decision that will be made shortly, the good people of Glass House will not get an opportunity for me to represent their concerns around weed management in the electorate of Glass House. People like the Lions Club of Woodford, who are doing a fantastic job trying to control fireweed and giant rat's tail, have significant concerns around the role the government is playing in weed control. They will not have those concerns represented here.

We have reports on the operation of the Crime and Corruption Act. We have reports on an inquiry into the redevelopment of the Mon Repos Turtle Centre that I know the member for Bundaberg and the member for Burnett were very keen to speak on. We have reports on aged care, end-of-life and palliative

care. We have reports on water financial audits, energy financial audits and voluntary assisted dying. Which member in this House has not had constituents contact them about voluntary assisted dying or palliative care?

Mr Brown: Have you met with them?

Mr POWELL: Who in this House has not received such an inquiry and who has not met with such individuals? It is outrageous that we cannot find one hour in each sitting week to accommodate debate on these committee reports. It is undemocratic that we are now not going to be given the opportunity to speak on those reports.

As I said, only a couple of years ago it was quite a regular occurrence for us to sit to at least 10.30, 11 o'clock at night, if not until 1 am or 2 am. Most of us on this side are here anyway. We do not get to go home to our beds each night. You yourself, Mr Speaker, cannot fly back up to Cairns at the end of each evening and then turn around and come back the next morning. We are here. We may as well work. That is what our constituents elect us to do. There is no reason for us to pull up stumps at seven o'clock. Extend it until 8 pm. Fit in an extra hour for committee reports. Indeed, extend it to 8 pm every night and we will fit in an extra three hours. We may even get through more than one or two committee reports in the remaining sittings.

It is irresponsible for government to make a decision like this to curtail democratic debate on reports that impact on the livelihoods and the wellbeing of the people of Queensland, including the people of Glass House. I do not support this motion and I encourage all members in this House not to support this motion.