

**McGOWAN GOVERNMENT — PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE**

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [3.28 pm]: — without notice:  
I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the following motion to be moved forthwith —

That this house condemns the McGowan government for shutting down parliamentary debate on critical issues to the people of Western Australia.

This is the first time that the government has used its numbers to gag debate in this house. It was pretty clear to us that neither the Premier nor the Minister for Transport wished to answer our questions or to answer questions from the people of Western Australia as to why the Premier said what he said on radio yesterday, when he denied any knowledge whatsoever of the tunnel borers being stopped. We heard debate and interjections from government members that we should use our matter of public interest motion, which is the tool available to us. Mr Speaker, we are two parties in opposition—we have the National Party and the Liberal Party—and we share those resources and we share the opportunities available to us in this house to bring matters of importance to this Parliament for debate.

Under our agreement with our partners in opposition, the Nationals, this week is their turn to put forward an MPI, and they have chosen to do that tomorrow. Therefore, the only tool available to the Liberal Party in opposition is a suspension of standing orders to bring these issues of public importance on for debate. That is why we have taken this course this week. The Premier lacks credibility. It is simply not credible to anybody in Western Australia that on 18 February, the Minister for Transport would put out a media release about the tunnel borers for the Forrestfield–Airport Link and not inform the Premier that one of those borers had stopped working because of issues with subsidence or whatever it might be. The borer had stopped working on 14 February, the Minister for Transport said she knew on 17 February, and on 18 February the minister and the Premier went out with the media pack. It is simply not credible to anybody on this side of the house and to anybody in the state of Western Australia that the Premier—the person in charge of running the state—would not have been informed about that. Yesterday, on radio 6PR Perth, the Premier said that he had found out about it that day. That is absolutely not credible. We have had media releases and updates on this project ad nauseam. Never once has it been flagged since 14 February that the borer has stopped working because of problems with the stability of the ground around the tunnel.

The Leader of the Opposition made some very good points when he spoke earlier. The borers have stopped and this project has been halted. Have people been laid off? We do not know. The government is silent on that. Are individuals who are attached to this project being paid for work that they are not performing because the borers have stopped? We do not know. The government is silent on that. Are taxpayers in Western Australia paying for people to remain idle on this project because the borers have stopped? We do not know. The government has refused to answer. It has refused to give the opposition—this small team of 12 people—an opportunity to debate this. It has refused to take an opportunity to explain the timeline of events. It has refused to be a responsible and transparent government. The government promised gold-standard transparency and gold-standard governance practices. Instead of that, the Premier has scuttled out of the Legislative Assembly. The Premier is not prepared to stay in the chamber for a suspension of standing orders to debate a motion that seeks to condemn him and his government for shutting down debate in this place. Shame on you, members opposite! There are 41 of you! There are 12 of us. We asked for a 20-minute debate to enable us to articulate our points about this matter. That would give the government 10 minutes to explain itself to the people of Western Australia. Instead, the government has gagged us. It has shut down debate for our small team of 12 people, which is trying to hold the government accountable to the people of Western Australia. The government has gagged us! Shame on you! During our eight years in government, there were very few times when the then Premier, Colin Barnett, refused a suspension of standing orders. This government is only halfway into the second year of its term, and it has shut us down. That goes to the heart of this issue. Why would the Premier want to shut down debate? Why would a government with overwhelming numbers want to shut down debate? It is because the government has something to hide.

Do not forget that this government wasted \$1.1 million on the John Langoulant review. Langoulant said that this sort of nonsense has no place in a modern government in Western Australia. All the recommendations in the Langoulant review said that this sort of practice should be abhorred. Governments should rise above it. Governments should be transparent. It is not good enough for the government to lecture us and say that we did not do it when we were in government, and then not do it itself, when it paid \$1.1 million to somebody to uncover what it thought were shutdowns and cover-ups. What a waste of money! What a waste of time! What a waste of effort! The ink is barely dry on the Langoulant report, and all we see is an utter lack of transparency from this government, and a Premier who cannot even respect the Parliament and stay in this chamber to listen to a debate that is condemning him for shutting down debate and shutting down scrutiny.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, your own member is on her feet and you are interjecting!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** This is an absolute disgrace. This would not be a problem had this Premier not promised gold-standard transparency. This would not be a problem had the Premier said, "I'm going to go back to the way Labor operated during the Burke years, with WA Inc. I'll deliver you that government." The Premier is delivering to this state of Western Australia a government akin to the government of the Burke years. As was alluded to by Colin Barnett, the former Premier and member for Cottesloe, that is what the Premier is delivering. The Premier is hoping no-one will notice what he is doing in this place. Not many people come to this place or listen to Parliament to find out what goes on here. The Premier is hoping no-one will know that he has gagged us. He is hoping no-one is paying attention to this issue. He is hoping that he is still in the honeymoon period and that the Forrestfield–Airport Link —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, you are not addressing the reason that standing orders need to be suspended. You should not be debating the motion, which you are starting to get into.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. I will be brief, because there are other members on this side who want to speak to the shameful act of this government to shut down debate in this house. The reason this motion is urgent is that this is the first time the government has used its numbers to gag debate on this very important issue to the people of Western Australia. The largest infrastructure project currently on the government's books is at a standstill because of issues that have not been properly articulated by the government. That is the issue on which the government has decided to gag debate. That is why this is urgent. That is why we implore the government to agree to the suspension of standing orders and take the opportunity to explain to this house when the Premier knew that the borers in this tunnel had stopped. That is the position that the opposition is taking on this matter. New members of the government need to understand that a gag on debate in this Parliament generally occurs when there has been repetitive debate or a deliberate attempt to filibuster to delay a bill and prevent the passage of legislation through this place.

**Ms J.M. Freeman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Mirrabooka!

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** A gag is generally used when a point has been laboured for too long and the Parliament needs some relief from it, or when no new material is being introduced. A gag is not used just because a Premier does not want to explain himself. That is the shameful action that this Premier has taken.

**MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman)** [3.38 pm]: This motion strikes at the heart of the integrity of this government. Let me explain why I say that and why it is important that this debate is undertaken now. We only need to reflect on what happened at question time, when prepared responses were handed from the Minister for Transport to the Premier, and from the Premier back to the minister, that did not answer the questions that were put. They did not even come close to answering the questions that were put. That is why this side of the house seeks the opportunity to have a proper debate on the issues raised, and rightfully so. That is why it is important now. I have 20 minutes to frame the reasons that I am to speak not to the debate but to the importance of why this side of the house should be debating this issue right now.

The government keeps saying that we can ask questions in question time. For 12 months whenever this side interjects about the quality of the answers given to questions, we are told that it is too bad. We might not like the answers we get, but they are the answers we are getting. That is what we are told and we have to take it. We have to use whatever opportunity we can to raise issues that exist today for the people of Western Australia. We are seeing that this government does not want to exhibit gold-plated transparency. It does not want to exhibit it at all. If it did, why did it not tell us that there were issues with the line? We expect challenges with tunnelling. It is a new process for Western Australia and we expect those challenges. Why not tell people proactively, "Hey, we've got a challenge here; something has happened", whatever it might be? We have heard that liquid is bubbling to the surface and that there are sinkholes. We have been told that it is all on track, but other people have told us that the first borer was expected at Airport Central at the end of January and the second one during March. Then we saw a March update put out by the government some four weeks after it was aware that the borer had stopped. Was there any mention of an issue with this borer?

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you are debating the motion. The question is that standing orders should be suspended. That is what we are debating, not anything else.

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Thank you for your guidance, Mr Speaker. I will come back to the point.

We have had an inability to get our point across that this government is not being transparent to the people of Western Australia. This is pretty much the only opportunity we have as an opposition to start making arguments in this house. What have we seen from the government through this process? In the previous suspension of standing

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orders, the opposition was gagged and did not have the opportunity to make its case to explain further, hence the need to suspend standing orders again and point out to people that this is inappropriate behaviour on behalf of the government. Democratic processes are important to Western Australia and they involve an active opposition challenging and critiquing what the government is undertaking. The point of suspending standing orders is to ensure that we have these processes and the ability to make arguments in this place. That is the reason I stand here making these arguments on behalf of the opposition. It is vitally important that the opposition be allowed at this time to debate the issue of the leader's awareness of what was going on and, if he was not made aware, why he was not made aware. That is getting to the heart of the issue. Major issues have occurred in this state and this issue is one of them, but we need the opportunity to debate that issue now. In question time we get "dorothy answers". That is what I would like to term it. I do not know whether there is such a thing. The government's prepared responses do not even answer the question being asked. Today in question time, some questions were asked of the Premier about why he was not made aware of major issues. This was asked in question time. I am talking about asking questions in question time and not getting an appropriate answer.

**The SPEAKER:** That has nothing to do with this motion, member. The motion is that standing orders be suspended to deal with the government shutting down parliamentary debate.

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I do not want to question your call on this, Mr Speaker, but the point here is the urgency of the suspension. Building an argument and a case around the urgency includes other opportunities that the opposition may or may not have in order to make its points to government.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** That is canvassing the ruling.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, I know. You are canvassing my ruling, but I understand your point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.C. NALDER:** Thank for your guidance again, Mr Speaker. I believe it is fundamentally important for the democratic process of this place that the opposition, both the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA, have the opportunity to debate this fully. We are referring to a major infrastructure project for Western Australia. We want to get to the bottom of it, and we see this as one of the only opportunities that we have to debate this fully. On that basis, I stand by the comments I have made. This is vitally important at this time. This is why we have expressed it as an urgent motion. We look forward to the opportunity to debate it further.

**MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren-Blackwood)** [3.45 pm]: It is hugely disappointing to see the government's actions today to shut down one of the opportunities that we, as the opposition, have to debate in this place. To me, as the member for Bateman pointed out, it rightly hits at the integrity of the government and also the democracy of this place. The point that I was hoping to make, in fact, on the first suspension—I will come to the point of how the Leader of the House has chosen to take it up—is that we have two parties in opposition. We share our time in this place, and one of those is in matters of public interest. Quite rightly, we all know that MPIs can happen on any day of the week. It does not have to be on a Tuesday. More often than not it happens on a Tuesday because of the number of days prior to that when things can happen in the public sphere, but it can sometimes happen on another day of the week. We have chosen to have ours tomorrow. The Liberal Party chose to move a suspension of standing orders in order to use the tools of Parliament to bring to public attention the issues that we see with the government and how it has managed its business. The government could hardly point to the opposition and say that it has been dissident in having a crack at doing things for the wrong reasons and raising all sorts of debate and suspending standing orders. It has not happened. I am trying to think of the last time we suspended standing orders; I am struggling to remember. It is not something that happens every day or on a regular basis. The government then shut down debate. There was an opportunity for the opposition to use one of the few tools that we have in opposition—Parliament is one of those—to raise the debate using standing orders, which is quite appropriate.

I want to now go to the point of the Leader of the House. The Leader of the House gave no public, on-the-record response about why the government did not support the suspension. He simply stood up and put the question. We asked for a suspension of standing orders and debated the reasons it was urgent to get it on the agenda because it is an issue that hit the airwaves in the last day or so. That is fair enough. We have not been dissident in how we have managed ourselves in opposition business and the Leader of the House did not even raise a public, on-the-record comment about why the government did not support it. He did not even raise that. It is an absolute shame on this government that it had not only shut down and gagged debate, but also not even given a public response or had the courtesy of telling people who read *Hansard* and track parliamentary debate why it had chosen to shut down the opposition in raising a suspension of standing orders on a really critical issue that we see in how government manages its business. That is an absolute shame. Therefore, it is absolutely appropriate, straight after that, that we raised another suspension to condemn the government for taking that path. It is absolutely important that it is raised now because it is right after the time that it occurred. This is an absolute chalk mark against the government's integrity. It tries to stand up on that platform of openness and transparency and then it shuts down

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parliamentary debate—the very pillar of democracy in Western Australia. This is an absolute shame on this government and it needs to get its act together, because not having good parliamentary debate in this place is not good for democracy and the people of Western Australia.

**MR P.A. KATSAMBANIS (Hillarys)** [3.49 pm]: I do not rise to my feet to speak on this motion with any great happiness. I would rather not have to rise to speak on a motion of this type. This is a serious motion and it can be described as an extraordinary motion—extraordinary because it goes to the heart of democracy in Western Australia. The public of Western Australia elects members of Parliament of all persuasions and it expects that its members of Parliament get an opportunity to properly scrutinise the government of the day. In particular when really important issues arise, urgent issues, the public of Western Australia expects not only its parliamentary representatives to interrogate the government about those issues, but also a fair, honest, open and comprehensive response from its government. That is why we as an opposition have brought this motion to the house today. Had the government not acted in such an undemocratic way to shut down debate, had the government conducted to provide fundamental explanations not just to this chamber, not just to the opposition parties, but to the people of Western Australia, we would not need to bring this motion on today. But it is an important motion and it is an urgent motion. The urgency in particular is so that this does not set a pattern and does not set a new low mark in the lack of transparency of any government of any persuasion here in Western Australia. The government should not use its numbers in this place to deny opposition members the opportunity to have a say, and in particular it should not use its numbers in this place as an excuse not to provide appropriate, timely and honest explanations to the public of Western Australia. This motion before the house needs to be urgently debated. We need an urgent explanation from the government about whether it understands the principles of parliamentary democracy and whether it is able to furnish the people of Western Australia with the confidence that as a government it will stand up and answer any issues that arise, rather than try to hide them under the carpet and hope that the 24-hour media cycle moves away and it does not get proper scrutiny. These things need to be answered by the government urgently, which is why we need to consider the substantive motion that is the subject of this motion to suspend standing orders today. This does not need to be shoved aside and debated on the never-never. This is an issue. The suspension of standing orders to debate the motion that has been put in the suspension motion is absolutely critical. It goes to the heart of whether the minister and every other minister over there respects this Parliament and the people of Western Australia.

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I wonder whether I could ask one of the attendants to take the motion to the member so he knows what he is talking about.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, that is not a point of order and I call you to order for the first time.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** That attitude simply reinforces the point that we as an opposition are making. The government thinks this place is a joke. The government thinks the people of Western Australia are too silly to understand how it is undermining the standards of parliamentary democracy in this place. When we see ministers acting like schoolyard bullies, it reinforces the point that it is extremely urgent that we get this Parliament back on track. The substantive motion before the house would help get parliamentary democracy in Western Australia back on track before it derails into some sort of left-wing utopian one-party state in which the government tells us what we should think and we go ahead and think about it. The original motion to suspend standing orders, which gave rise to the current motion to suspend standing orders before the house, was seeking an explanation on an extraordinarily important and extremely urgent matter that ought to concern and does concern all Western Australians—perhaps the most expensive project being undertaken by our government in Western Australia at the moment. We were seeking those explanations. The government could have provided those explanations; it could even have debated the suspension of standing orders. Instead, it brought out the guillotine; it brought out the gag order—immediately, as soon as the Leader of the Opposition had sat down. That is an affront to democracy. It gives rise to the need to urgently debate the way this government treats this place, treats the Parliament of Western Australia, and along with that the way that this government treats the public of Western Australia—with complete and utter disdain. The suspension of standing orders is needed so we can debate the motion on foot and let the government explain to the public of Western Australia why it wants to hide from scrutiny and why it does not want members of Parliament to challenge it on difficult issues.

**The SPEAKER:** Get back to the point please.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** That is the point, Mr Speaker. The point is that we need to urgently consider whether this government wants to be open and transparent and reach the gold standard of transparency it set for itself or whether that was simply lip-service in an election campaign.

*Point of Order*

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**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I want to assist the member, because the motion —

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** What is the point of order, what is the number?

**The SPEAKER:** You do not need to give a number.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The member is saying that he wants to have this debate on the basis that it is somehow about democracy and accountability. Neither of those words are used in the motion. Whatever reason he wants to debate has to be related to the motion before the house and not any other matter.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, member. You will get back to the point, member for Hillarys.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I will do. I pick up —

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The member appears to be talking about the body of the motion. I thought debate on the suspension of standing orders was about the urgency now.

**Mr W.J. Johnston** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member!

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Further to that point of order, the member for Cannington used the word, “urgency”. I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to assist me to find where in the standing orders debate on the suspension of standing orders is confined to the reason of urgency.

**The SPEAKER:** It is because when there is a motion to suspend standing orders, it has to be put why it is urgent that they be suspended. That is the way that standing orders can be suspended—because there is a motion to suspend standing orders, why it is urgent to suspend them has to be addressed in the debate.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Mr Speaker, could you assist me further, maybe off-line or now, by telling me which standing order states that it has to be urgent. That is all I am asking.

**The SPEAKER:** I will get it to you.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was not sure whether you were going to give a ruling then or whether we would wait until a bit later.

**The SPEAKER:** I will get back with that one.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I will continue. Again, I will point out that the intervention by the minister goes to the heart of why this is an urgent matter that must be debated today. If shutting down debate in Parliament does not go to the heart of democracy in this state, I genuinely do not know what does. It probably highlights the difference between members on the government benches today and members on this side of the house. We want to have a robust parliamentary process. We welcome open scrutiny of government and government decisions. Sadly, from what we have seen today in both the shutting down of debate on the previous suspension and the attempts by members of the opposition to make our case for the suspension that is currently being considered, we have seen a government that wants to bully us into submission. It wants to shut us down rather than provide appropriate explanations. There may very well be appropriate explanations. I have said in this place before that I want good government. I am barracking for all you guys to succeed—not to fail! I would like to get that explanation, but the government says, “Nothing to see here! Shut down debate!” The public of Western Australia will not stand for it. We will shine a spotlight on the fact that the government has already failed its own test of gold standard transparency. This is not gold standard; this is not silver standard; this is not bronze standard. This is the worst standard possible! I urge the government to support this suspension of standing orders and, during the substantive debate, to reinforce by its actions, not just its words or lip-service, that it is committed to the democratic traditions of this state. Unfortunately, previous governments of a Labor persuasion demonstrated quite clearly that they were not committed to any sort of scrutiny—certainly not parliamentary scrutiny—and were not committed to the democratic process in this state. This simple motion calls for a debate on why the government chose to shut down debate raised by the opposition rather than provide a logical and plausible explanation of the government’s actions, why it took them, and their timeliness.

Without labouring the point any further, I strongly urge the house to favourably consider the suspension. Then I strongly urge the government, during the substantive debate on the motion that has been put by the suspension, to provide real explanations and a commitment that in the future it will not gag debate and will provide an

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opportunity for opposition members to properly scrutinise the government and provide real answers to the public of Western Australia on issues that are extraordinarily important to us all.

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [4.03 pm]: I want to make some comments about the motion that is before this place and the feigned outrage by the opposition about motions to close debate. I was screamed at by the member for Scarborough and accused of being an outrageous person. In fact, I have not seen any sort of behaviour like that for some time, except perhaps by the late member for South Perth, Hon Phillip Pental, but he did it in a much more appropriate and effective way. When he used to sit over there he would always use the term “You will rue the day!” as his comment to —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This is my turn. You are on three calls so I would be very careful.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis:** How many are you on?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** None, I do not think.

**The SPEAKER:** No. But you are on your first, member for Hillarys.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This has never happened before. It was less than a year into the Barnett government of 2013—the election was in March 2013—and in November of that year there was a debate about procedures in the house. It was 27 November, so members can check *Hansard* if they wish. The member for Scarborough, with her feigned anger and her feigned disdain, has left the chamber now, but never mind. Who moved a gag motion then, I wonder? It was the then Treasurer, who is now the Leader of the Opposition. The government had not even gone through the first parliamentary year. I want to make very clear the reason we are not entertaining this motion, or the previous motion, during which the Leader of the Opposition used 20 minutes to seek urgency.

If this matter that had come to light was so urgent, would one not think that the first question the opposition would ask in question time would be on that matter? But it was not. The first question that was asked in this place had nothing to do with the Forrestfield rail extension and tunnelling. It had nothing to do with it! The opposition had its first opportunity, after prayers, in its first question—this was the big, steaming issue—and what did it do? It did not even use its first question. This is one of the reasons. The normal convention is that there is an opportunity to raise a matter of public importance. The MPI—that is the opportunity the opposition had today to debate this motion that it did not think was so urgent that it failed to ask about it in its first question in Parliament. The opposition failed to use the MPI process. This house has to operate appropriately. If the opposition’s tactic is to not take its MPI every Tuesday but, instead, to suspend standing orders, I am sorry, that is not how Parliament should work. That is the government’s view. The opposition has already done it two weeks in a row. If that is the opposition’s tactic, fine, but, as I said to members last week, we will not cop this pattern that is against convention and is in fact a ludicrous abuse of the process and procedures. The then Treasurer moved a gag motion at 1.00 pm on 27 November 2013—just several months into the first parliamentary year of the re-elected Barnett government. As I said last week, if the opposition is going to make this a pattern, we will not cop it! There are processes for the opposition to use in this Parliament to raise them. The opposition’s first opportunity was its first question, but it failed to do it. It failed to use its first question, which is usually the priority question for an opposition in question time.

I seek to work with the manager of opposition business and I think we have a reasonable relationship, but is this the pattern and is this going to happen every Tuesday? Half of the members opposite tell me they want to go home early. Half of them say, “When can I get out of here?”

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Last week it was, “Can we get out of here early?”

**The SPEAKER:** I am sure you are going to get to the point.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Last week it was, “Can we get out of here as soon as we can?”

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The member for Carine is the worst one for it. He is one of the worst ones for wanting to get out of this place. If this is going to be the pattern of behaviour, then, effectively, members opposite can use the standing orders, as they have, to do this every Tuesday after question time. If they are going to move a motion and suddenly feign concern about urgency, concocted during question time, having failed to use their first question to address the issue if it is so urgent and then, out of mock outrage, rather than using their matter of public interest, which members opposite have every opportunity to, and use this tactic, that is fine. But do not then come complaining to me when we start sitting late on Wednesday nights and Thursday afternoons into the evening. Members opposite have their own time for private members’ business, which is of course from 4.00 pm till 7.00 pm

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on Wednesdays, but they are not even using that effectively either. The hearts of members opposite have not been in any of the debates we have had this year, and certainly not last year. Their use of private members' time has been pathetic. Very few members opposite have spoken on them and, if they do, their speeches are almost incoherent in argument.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, get back to the point, please.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Members opposite have simply decided to just abuse the process. We want to get through some important bills tonight. If members opposite want to sit late, that is fine. Tonight, we will get through the message from the upper house on the no body, no parole legislation. It is a bill that members opposite have continuously stymied—continuously delayed—but we will get through it tonight. If they want to stay here until 3.00 am —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, quieten it down.

*Point of Order*

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** The Leader of the House is not speaking to the motion. He is completely off the track.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not think that is a point of order. I think he is, but he tends to get off track a little bit. He will get back to the point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We have urgent legislation, which has been stymied by members on the other side. They have consistently tried to delay it in the other place and even through this place.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** They failed to support it when we put the motion forward in opposition. We will pass that legislation tonight. It is important legislation for the families that have been waiting for this legislation to pass.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Leader of the Opposition has no credibility—none whatsoever.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We will not be supporting this motion, Mr Speaker, but if this is the pattern, that is fine. Do not then come complaining to us that we are suddenly sitting late at night because we wish to pursue a legislative program. If members opposite are going to use delaying tactics, that is fine. We have plenty here to bolster the numbers to having some late sittings—do not worry. But those guys over there have already demonstrated that their hearts are not in it. They have no credibility. If members opposite want to say how terrible what I did was—the member for Scarborough screeched at me across the chamber—then I will remind them of 27 November.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is a classic. On 27 November, the Leader of the Opposition not only —

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I have a point of order, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** You will get back to the point, minister.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** About urgency—absolutely. Back then, less than 12 months into the new Barnett government, which was elected in March 2013, not only —

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The minister is not going on about anything to do with the urgency of the motion. This line of debate is absolutely off the message.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I do not think that is a point of order, because he is talking about how the previous government —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Not only, Mr Speaker —

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Excuse me; after you stood up for 18 minutes and kept going, blurring the lines, I am just saying that the minister has the opportunity to just blur the lines a bit.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Tuesday, 20 March 2018]

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Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Dean Nalder; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Peter Katsambanis; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr David Templeman; Mr Tony Krsticevic

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**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Mr Speaker, the minister is going into the previous government's arrangements and I fail to understand how that has anything to do with the urgency of this debate.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This is why we do not support this motion as being urgent. On 27 November, not only did the now Leader of the Opposition move the gag motion, but he moved the gag motion on his own side's motion. They gagged themselves! The then Leader of the House, Hon John Day, moved a motion, and then the now Leader of the Opposition, as Treasurer, moved the gag motion!

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** He gagged his own member's motion!

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** I fail to understand how any relationship with a historical debate or position taken in this house can possibly relate to the urgency of the debate now.

**The SPEAKER:** That is a point of order. Minister, you will get to the point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am just about to conclude. The relevance is that I was screeched at by the member for Scarborough about how outrageous and terrible this is, saying, "What an awful thing to do!"

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** But members opposite have done it before —

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** — and it was against their own member's motion!

**The SPEAKER:** Minister!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** How pathetic is that!

*Point of Order*

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** Mr Speaker, you are on your feet, so I do not want to talk; I am on three calls.

**The SPEAKER:** No, it is okay.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The minister continues to take the path of looking at history in this place as distinct from making the debate about the urgency of the motion before the house.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, I think you have said enough.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Are you sitting me down?

**The SPEAKER:** I am.

*Debate Resumed*

**MR A. KRSTICEVIC (Carine)** [4.15 pm]: I would also like to speak to the urgency of this motion. I notice that one of the key points made by the Leader of the House in his 10-minute debate was that it was not the first question that the opposition asked in question time, but we asked four of our five questions on the Forrestfield–Airport Link and if —

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you are not talking about the urgency of the suspension of standing orders.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I am focusing on the debate that the Leader of the House had when he said a number of times that it was not the first question that we asked.

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** When the minister raised this issue in his address, the opposition took points of order to say that he was not debating the issue. Now the opposition is raising the exact same issue in debate.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not a point of order.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Obviously, in those four questions that we asked on this issue in question time, if we had got the answers —

**The SPEAKER:** Member, can you get to the urgency of debate.

**Extract from Hansard**

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**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I will, Mr Speaker. I am just making the point that if we had got the answers during question time, we would not have to suspend standing orders to get the answers. Four questions out of five were asked about it in question time. The Premier and the Minister for Transport had four opportunities to answer the question, but they did not. They avoided the question, which is why opposition members were then forced to call for the suspension of standing orders so that we could get an answer to this very important issue. As we were debating this very important issue and the reason for the suspension of standing orders —

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Mr Speaker, I have a point of order.

A member interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members of the opposition can call points of order if they want to and so can members of the other side.

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** The member seems confused. He is debating the issue that relates to the answers given by the minister, but that is not what this debate is about. This debate is a separate resolution, not the one we debated before. I would ask you, Mr Speaker, to get him to direct his comments to this motion.

**The SPEAKER:** That is a point of order and I am sure the member will get back to the point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Like I said, I am just following the lead of the Leader of the House—along his lines. I was hoping that I was following the right track because that is exactly what he was doing —

**The SPEAKER:** And I kept telling him to get back to the point.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** I will take your advice that I need to refocus. As we all know, when debate was gagged, no reason was given, so we were putting our argument why we need to suspend standing orders to have a very urgent debate about the critical issue. We were gagged with no reason given. I cannot believe, in this democracy, that the government would not be prepared to give a reason that it would gag such an important issue. We know it is an important issue because it is a critical piece of infrastructure. There are concerns about this infrastructure and the people of Western Australia need to know what the problems are, who knew what, and when they knew it.

**The SPEAKER:** No; it is about urgency.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** We found out about this only yesterday, Mr Speaker. We know that the boring machine was offline from 14 February.

**The SPEAKER:** No, you are getting into a debate. All you can talk about is the urgency in bringing on this motion.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** That is correct, Mr Speaker, but if I cannot talk about what the issue is, how can I speak on its urgency? This is urgent. It is urgent for many different reasons. If I cannot focus on the dates, the concerns and the timing, then it is very hard to get to the specifics of the urgency. The urgency is that on 19 March, the Premier was on the radio and he said that it was the first time he had heard of these issues.

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** Mr Speaker, I again draw your attention to the fact that the member is discussing the previous suspension motion, not this one. This one has nothing to do with Forrestfield. Read exactly what this says and then ask the member to address this motion, not the previous one, which has already been defeated.

**The SPEAKER:** I agree with that point of order.

**Mr D.T. REDMAN:** The very reason for moving this suspension motion is the actions of the government on the previous motion and the importance of that to the house. It is the very reason that we are talking about that breaking down.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! The motion is about shutting down parliamentary debate. That is what the motion says, so members cannot talk about anything else except the urgency of debating the issue of shutting down parliamentary debate.

*Debate Resumed*

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** As I understand it, the motion that was moved states that this house condemns the McGowan government for shutting down parliamentary debate on critical issues to the people of Western Australia. There are two points in the motion that I want to focus on: first, shutting down debate and the urgency of having to move this motion because debate was shut down; and, second, the people of

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Western Australia not being informed about critical issues to do with their infrastructure. I want to focus on those two points in the motion and the urgency of the motion to suspend standing orders. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, we are asking for only 10 minutes of debate by members on each side of the chamber—20 minutes. The minister stood up for 10 minutes and told us why it was not going to happen and we have now wasted probably two hours debating why we wanted 10 minutes to talk about why this issue is critical.

The government had four questions during question time to provide answers, but it did not answer anything. It is very important to know why debate was shut down, why the question was put and why no reason was given by the government about why the people of Western Australia had no right to know the answer to a very important question. There is nothing more urgent than for the people of Western Australia to know why those questions were not answered, why debate was shut down and why those issues were not able to be debated. What is the government hiding? Why is it not open, honest and transparent with the people of Western Australia? Why did it have to shut down debate? They are very critical questions that need to be answered today.

We found out only yesterday that the Premier had no idea what was going on with a critical piece of infrastructure. It is important to know, as outlined in the second part of the motion, about the critical issues that are affecting the people of Western Australia. They have a right to know what is happening. If the government has nothing to hide, it should not have any problem in suspending standing orders to allow members on either side of the chamber to talk for 10 minutes. However, members opposite are trying to lecture us about how we are wasting time. I am sorry, but 20 minutes is not a lot of time to debate such an important issue.

As we have said previously, we would normally debate this issue as a matter of public interest, but, unfortunately, it is not our turn to move an MPI this week. We share that arrangement with the Nationals WA. Everybody in this Parliament clearly knows how this system works; when Nationals members move an MPI, they raise issues that are relevant to them, and when we move ours, we raise issues that are relevant to us. The government cannot point the finger at an MPI.

This issue is urgent. It is important to know why the debate was shut down. Why was no reason given in the debate on the previous motion to suspend standing orders about why the Leader of the House shut down debate? He got up and tried to explain why he did not support this motion to suspend standing orders, but we still do not know why he shut down debate on the previous motion. He did not give us a reason and so we did not have an opportunity to examine this very critical issue.

As was mentioned, the Langoulant report states that we need transparency. We need to know when things happen. We need to be open, honest and accountable. Of course, the motion is urgent because we must ensure that the recommendations of the Langoulant report are followed by this government and that it does not just pay them lip-service and wave them around when it thinks they are important, but not when they can come back to bite it and make sure that it is doing the right thing.

I cannot see why standing orders cannot be suspended so that we can find out why debate was shut down, why we did not have the right to express our opinions, why we did not have the right to spend 10 minutes talking about the most important project in this state and why we were denied the opportunity to speak on that project so that we could understand what the Premier and the minister knew about the issue. Instead, we were shut down. We were given no opportunity. The people of Western Australia were given no answers during question time. They still have no idea why this project came to a halt on 14 February. All they know is that when we asked the questions, we were shut down. We were told, "You don't have the right to ask that question. We're voting to take that opportunity away from you." Of course, we have just been lectured about the times that we did not approve suspension motions in the past. I am sorry, but the government came in with a new mandate that it would be open, honest and transparent and that it would allow the people of Western Australia to know what is going on.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you are being repetitious.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Instead, debate was shut down. We still have no idea why that is the case. Why did the Premier find out only on 19 March about something that happened on 14 February? It is the most important piece of infrastructure in this state, yet debate was shut down, so we could not talk about that issue.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, your own member is on his feet.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** The Leader of the House made a good point: this question should have been answered in question time. We asked the question four times and we did not get an answer. His point was that it should have been the first question we asked. Does that mean that only the first question gets answered?

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you are repeating yourself.

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**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Sorry; that is right, Mr Speaker.

The Leader of the House said that the reason he shut down debate was that it was not the first question we asked. If it had been the first question we asked, he would not have shut down debate. The reason he shut down debate was that it was the second, third, fourth and fifth questions we asked. In his view, it should have been the first question, even though the next four questions were about that issue. There is no excuse for the government not to answer those questions. If it had been the first question, the government would have answered it. That is why he shut down debate. He has shut down debate in the past obviously not on a motion to suspend standing orders, but on other issues. We have talked about the reason that debate was shut down. We know that debates in this house are shut down when the issue drags on and people spend many hours discussing the point and they just labour the one issue over and again. People then say, "You have had a thousand questions on this issue and we have spent hours on it and you have the answers and you know exactly what is going on." In this case, debate has been shut down and we have no answers. We have no understanding of why debate was shut down. We still do not know why it was shut down. The only reason the Leader of the House gave was that it was not the first question we asked. I am not sure how solid an answer that is—it was not the first question we asked! Do we get only one question from now on?

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you are repeating yourself. I will sit you down if you keep doing that.

**Mr A. KRSTICEVIC:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like members opposite to allow us to find out why debate was shut down. I would like members opposite to allow us to suspend standing orders so that each side can have 10 minutes to debate why we were not allowed to talk about critical issues affecting the people of Western Australia and why we were not allowed to understand what the Premier and the minister knew so that we can relay that to the people of Western Australia and we can understand exactly what the government is doing.

*Question to be Put*

**MR W.J. JOHNSTON (Cannington — Minister for Mines and Petroleum)** [4.28 pm]: In accordance with standing order 106, I move —

That the question be now put.

*Division*

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (36)

Ms L.L. Baker	Mr W.J. Johnston	Mr S.J. Price	Mrs J.M.C. Stojkovski
Dr A.D. Buti	Mr F.M. Logan	Mr D.T. Punch	Mr C.J. Tallentire
Mr J.N. Carey	Mr M. McGowan	Mr J.R. Quigley	Mr D.A. Templeman
Mrs R.M.J. Clarke	Ms S.F. McGurk	Ms M.M. Quirk	Mr P.C. Tinley
Mr M.J. Folkard	Mr S.A. Millman	Mrs M.H. Roberts	Mr B. Urban
Ms J.M. Freeman	Mr Y. Mubarakai	Ms C.M. Rowe	Mr R.R. Whitby
Ms E. Hamilton	Mr M.P. Murray	Ms R. Saffioti	Ms S.E. Winton
Mr T.J. Healy	Mrs L.M. O'Malley	Ms A. Sanderson	Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Ms J.J. Shaw	Mr D.R. Michael ( <i>Teller</i> )

Noes (16)

Mr I.C. Blayney	Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup	Mr W.R. Marmion	Mr K. O'Donnell
Mr V.A. Catania	Mr A. Krsticevic	Mr J.E. McGrath	Mr D.T. Redman
Mrs L.M. Harvey	Mr S.K. L'Estrange	Dr M.D. Nahan	Mr P.J. Rundle
Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam ( <i>Teller</i> )

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Pair

Mr R.H. Cook

Ms M.J. Davies

Question thus passed.

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion Resumed*

**The SPEAKER:** As this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need an absolute majority in order to succeed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

*Division*

**Extract from *Hansard***  
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Division taken with the following result —

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Mr P. Katsambanis	Mr R.S. Love	Mr D.C. Nalder	Ms L. Mettam ( <i>Teller</i> )

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Mr M. Hughes	Mr P. Papalia	Ms J.J. Shaw	Mr D.R. Michael ( <i>Teller</i> )

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Pair

Ms M.J. Davies

Mr R.H. Cook

Absolute majority not achieved; question thus negated.