

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FAMILY VIOLENCE) BILL 2018

Statement

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [5.56 pm]: I want to thank the house for its forbearance in assisting us this afternoon in the passage of the Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2018.

Statement

HON PETER COLLIER (North Metropolitan — Leader of the Opposition) [5.56 pm]: I have a few comments and they are not going to be as pleasant as those of the Leader of the House because I am very disappointed with the government. We have all just witnessed what I would regard as one of the most shambolic exhibitions of the management of this house that I have ever seen. That is enough said.

What offended me most were the comments from the ministerial colleagues of members opposite in the chamber last night. They were absolutely disgraceful. Not only were they were disgraceful, they were inaccurate and completely and absolutely incorrect. We on this side of the chamber have always acted in good faith with members opposite in getting legislation through—and we did on this occasion. I have no doubt that when the Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2018 goes to the other place, we will get lambasted again because we did not get it there by three o'clock, which is what we agreed to. That was out of my hands. I apologise to the Leader of the House for that. I did say three o'clock, but I can act only on behalf of the Liberal Party, not the crossbench. I would like to know what negotiations occurred with the Leader of the House or the minister responsible for the bill to try to get it through by three o'clock. I cannot speak for the Nationals WA, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, One Nation, the Liberal Democrats or the Greens; I can speak only on behalf of the Liberal Party. We tried to expedite the bill. But the behaviour and comments of Labor members down the other end last night were absolutely disgraceful.

The Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2018 was read into this place on 28 June. It was referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation on 27 October by the Leader of the House with the unanimous support—no conditions attached—of this chamber. I want to make it quite clear that no conditions were attached. There was not a side deal that we would come back and expedite the bill. Originally, the Standing Committee on Legislation was going to look at the bill until February next year. However, through negotiation, which we do in this place, we collectively decided to bring the date forward to 22 November. The committee did exactly what it should have done. It did a damn good job in a very short space of time. The bill came back on 22 November and was brought on for debate in this place—I want the Leader of the House's colleagues in the other place to listen to this—at nine o'clock on Tuesday night, with a supplementary notice paper of 40 amendments, yet the government expected us to get it through. Apparently, I had agreed to get it through by Wednesday. I want to make it quite clear that on no occasion did I ever—I categorically deny that—say that we would get it through by the end of Parliament on Wednesday. Again, I cannot speak for my colleagues on the crossbench or the Greens, and I am sure that my colleagues would not have agreed to getting the bill through by six o'clock on Wednesday. Yet according to Minister McGurk, that is exactly what happened. According to the uncorrected *Hansard*, she stated —

The opposition gave a commitment that that bill would be back here before the end of the parliamentary sitting day today so that we could pass that legislation but now we are hearing all sorts of excuses.

I do not know who Minister McGurk heard that from, but what she heard was wrong. It is a lie. I never gave a commitment. She also stated —

What good is the commitment given by members of the Liberal and National Parties, particularly in this place, about the passage of bills before the end of the parliamentary year when bills go to the other place and those commitments mean nothing? What sort of party organisation does the opposition run when those commitments mean ... nothing?

How dare she say that! How dare she make a value judgement about our commitment. The Leader of the House knows that on every single occasion the Liberal Party has made a commitment, we have upheld that commitment.

Hon Sue Ellery: I want to put on the record that when the Leader of the Opposition gives me a commitment, he honours those commitments.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I know we have a good working relationship. That is what I said and I have been very careful with my words. My issue is not with the Leader of the House; it is with the intemperate comments of her colleagues in the other place.

Here is the pièce de résistance—Hon Bill Johnston went on an absolute tirade yesterday. It was full of lies and innuendo. I am incandescent with rage at Hon Bill Johnston's comments—with all due respect to the President.

The PRESIDENT: Member, whatever that particular member of the Assembly has to say has absolutely nothing to do with me in my role as the President.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Thank you, Madam President. I have great respect for you and I apologise if any offence was taken, because it was not meant.

He said, “the problem is the Liberal Party is untrustworthy.” This is the minister who wants us to work with you guys and get this through! According to the uncorrected *Hansard*, he stated —

... the problem is that the Liberal Party is not trustworthy.

Also —

We are having this problem today because the Liberal Party did not tell the Labor Party the truth.

I would love to know the truth we did not tell! I challenge Hon Bill Johnston to stand in that place and tell us where we did not tell the truth.

... the leader of the Labor Party ... Hon Sue Ellery, and the Leader of the Liberal Party, Hon Peter Collier, agreed that it should go to a committee to avoid a lengthy debate in the chamber.

We did nothing of the kind! We collectively agreed that it should go to a committee and then we would have due debate. He also stated —

There is a problem because the Liberal opposition has not carried through with its deal.

Garbage—absolute garbage! The Liberal Party has carried through with the deal. Why is that bill now on its way to the Legislative Assembly? It is because we upheld exactly what we agreed to, as did, in good faith, all members of the crossbench. When Labor Party members got their little speaking points 12 months ago, I am sure it had, “How to aggravate the opposition and ensure it obstructs legislation getting through the Parliament.” Every single rule was broken! Members in the other place are very pleased with themselves. They have a thumping majority and think they can just bulldoze it through and that the upper house just has to acquiesce. When the upper house does not acquiesce, they start throwing falsehoods around. How dare he say that the Liberal Party is not trustworthy!

According to the uncorrected *Hansard*, Hon Bill Johnston stated —

The only reason there is a problem now is because the Liberal Party is not sticking to the deal. The deal agreed between Hon Peter Collier and Hon Sue Ellery was that the committee could deal with it. If I knew at that time that the Liberal Party would not stick to its word, I would not have agreed to it going to the Legislation Committee. I genuinely feel betrayed in this matter.

Hon Bill Johnston should not feel betrayed. If he really wants to work in a cooperative and collaborative fashion in this place and try to get legislation through, he should not stand in that place down there and moan and groan that we are purportedly failing to get legislation through. That bill came into this chamber at nine o'clock on Tuesday night. We have worked overtime to get it through. Everyone here knows that that bill did not get the scrutiny it deserved. I do not know what will come out the other end; I have no idea. That bill is as good as it could be based on the fact that we had to rush through the legislation in a couple of hours. That is why we have a problem—the ethos and mentality of the members down there. They think all they have to do is rush it through. After five or 10 minutes of debate, they guillotine the debate and send it to us. We do not operate that way. The sooner ministers and the government in the other place understand that they do not have a majority in the upper house and the Liberal Party does not have a majority in the upper house, the better. The Liberal Party has nine members, the government has 14 members and there is the crossbench and the Greens. The government has to start negotiating with the crossbench, the Greens and the Liberal Party and treating us with a bit of respect. It will get what it wants; it will get its legislation through. All these tirades of abuse do make us more indignant and put our back up and makes us think, “If that’s the way you’re going to treat us, we will take our time.” We have agreed to get a plethora of other bills through by next Thursday. As on every other occasion, we will get through them. Today we agreed to extra hours! What else do you guys want? Do you want us to sit down and kiss your toes? What do you actually want? We have gotten to the point that we are so frustrated that we do not want to be cooperative anymore. I understand that it is not the Leader of the House’s issue, but she is a senior member of the government. At the next cabinet meeting or wherever she is, can she please get that message through? They cannot go into the chamber and make false accusations against the Liberal Party and its members in the upper house and expect to get away with it. If the government expects to get its legislative agenda through, it should treat us with a bit of respect.