

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — SITTING HOURS**

*Standing Orders Suspension — Motion*

**HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House)** [3.03 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended so as to enable the Council to sit beyond 9.45 pm on this day's sitting and take members' statements at a time ordered by the house.

If I may, this is to enable us to complete today the Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia) Bill 2021. Advice made available to me behind the chair is that the expectation is that we will finish that bill and may even start another bill before we would rise at the normal time, but, if we are close to finishing that bill, I would like the opportunity for us to be able to complete that today. I thank the house in anticipation of its support.

**HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition)** [3.04 pm]: The issue that we really face over the next little bit is how many bills the government intends to get through between now and when the house rises for the Christmas break. The bills on the notice paper include completion of the Criminal Law (Unlawful Consorting and Prohibited Insignia) Bill 2021, on which we are at clause 2, and the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021, which we have not yet started, but it is a bill that the opposition supports and it is not expected to take a large amount of time. There is also the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021, to be debated along with the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Amendment Bill 2021. That is a massive bill. That is not a small piece of legislation. That bill will then be followed by the Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which is a massive bill of a couple of hundred pages and 190-something clauses on a contentious issue. That bill will be followed by the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. The order may vary a bit.

I suggest that, theoretically, with two weeks to go, after a week having been added, debating two massive bills and one large bill that we are part way through—it is, again, a fair-sized bill, and only the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill will go through in a reasonably short time—is a massive undertaking for a house that is here to give due scrutiny to legislation. There comes a point at which it appears that the opposition is being held over a barrel with this. We are, because obviously the government has the numbers and it gets to make the decisions and make the choices, but this reminds me of the year before the election when we were waiting for a list of bills to debate before Christmas and the list was so unrealistic that we obviously would not get to them.

**Hon Alannah MacTiernan:** Member, you need to look at the amount of time people are taking on some of these clauses.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, due scrutiny is due scrutiny, and if this is holding the opposition over a barrel, I guess over a barrel it is, because the opposition's intention is not to simply throw away the scrutiny of legislation because the list of legislation is an enormous one. I do not think that is appropriate. I will work with the Leader of the House, to the best of my ability, to get legislation through in a timely manner. I have given her that commitment, but that does not mean that we will throw away our due role and our due duty. Otherwise, I think we make a mockery of the debate we had around changing the representation in this place.

I accept that this probably means that every morning or every afternoon the Leader of the House will move the equivalent motion. I think that is quite likely, given the process. We might see debate slimmed through other means. I urge the government to look at the level of detail that it seeks to get through over a two-week sitting period. There is a number of enormously complex pieces of legislation—three large bills, or three and a half if we include the one we are part way through—and I suggest that this is a highly ambitious and perhaps unrealistic target. We as an opposition accept that there is not much we can do about it, but we will not be blackmailed into passing it without due scrutiny. I think that we just need to be prepared to put the coffeepot on.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.