

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE — SITTING HOURS

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

HON SUE ELLERY (South Metropolitan — Leader of the House) [10.07 am] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended so as to enable the Legislative Council to sit beyond —

- (a) 5.20 pm on Thursday, 9 December 2021;
- (b) 9.45 pm on Tuesday, 14 December 2021;
- (c) 6.20 pm on Wednesday, 15 December 2021; and
- (d) 5.20 pm on Thursday, 16 December 2021;

and that members' statements on those days be taken at a time ordered by the house.

If I may, by way of explanation, President, this is a result, as honourable members would be aware, of extensive discussions behind the chair on how we might achieve the government's legislative agenda. In particular, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for his role in reaching agreement on what I think is quite a sensible proposition. In the course of those conversations, we canvassed a range of ways that we might add some additional hours, including starting earlier for example. But the proposition that we have reached agreement on would see the following happen. We anticipate completing the second reading of the Aboriginal cultural heritage bills and going into committee today by 5.20 pm. We would complete the Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation's committee stage and third reading by close of business on Tuesday next week. We would complete the third reading of—this is not its proper name—the puppy farming bill, if I can call it that, by close of business on Wednesday next week, and complete the industrial relations legislation by close of business on Thursday next week. If we need a few minutes beyond those times, the motion before us gives us the opportunity to do that, but I have sought and been given a commitment from the Leader of the Opposition that, in good faith, we are aiming to meet the deadlines that I have just set out. It will require everybody's cooperation; I appreciate that. I thank the house for that and urge members to support the motion.

HON DR STEVE THOMAS (South West — Leader of the Opposition) [10.10 am]: I thank the Leader of the House for that. I want to run through this and confirm. I potentially would have used "exhaustive" as much as extensive discussions behind the chair yesterday.

Hon Colin de Grussa: Exhausting?

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Exhaustive and exhausting conversations yesterday. I want to confirm those. I make the note that the proposals that we are now discussing were actually initiated by me on behalf of the opposition, so the time frames that we are discussing have been put to every member of my team. We have also had extensive discussions with the crossbench, and apologies to any crossbench member who has not been included, but we have attempted to include the crossbench in all these discussions.

Hon Sue Ellery: By way of interjection, if you will allow me, I canvassed the proposition with the crossbench as well, so I am confident that they were part of those conversations.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Yes; both sides have been in on that. Just allow me to reinforce what the opposition has proposed and what is the expectation of the house so that there can be no uncertainty.

These discussions started yesterday. We proposed to finish the Police Amendment (Compensation Scheme) Bill 2021 yesterday, and I thank Hon Peter Collier for his performance in that. We achieved that.

We proposed to then start on the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bill 2021 and the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Amendment Bill 2021. We proposed and agreed to complete the second reading debate on the Aboriginal cultural heritage bills and to commence the Committee of the Whole stage on this sitting day. I am confident that that will be achieved sooner rather than later and we will work to that end. We have committed to complete the committee and third reading stages of both Aboriginal cultural heritage bills by the close of business on Tuesday, 14 December, ideally by 9.45 pm, the normal time. That will be our aim, but if that is not immediately deliverable, I understand that is why the Leader of the House has moved the motion that we are about to vote on today, and the opposition accepts that in good faith. Obviously, we expect both sides to agree to this and approach it in that manner. Our lead speaker on the Aboriginal cultural heritage bills, Hon Neil Thomson, has been canvassed and has consented that that will be the aim of the opposition.

We agreed that we will attempt to complete the Dog Amendment (Stop Puppy Farming) Bill 2021. Hon Colin de Grussa will be the lead speaker for the opposition on that bill, and we are committing to complete that by close of business on Wednesday, 15 December, ideally by 6.20 pm. I know that other members who will be contributing to that, including myself and Hon Donna Faragher, have committed to that process.

We are then committed to complete the Industrial Relations Legislation Amendment Bill by close of business on Thursday, 16 December. The commitment is, through all our endeavours, to complete that by 5.20 pm, the normal closing time, at which point we can then finalise.

Obviously, all those things will require the commitment of my team. I have canvassed everyone and they have all given that commitment, including Hon Nick Goiran, who will be the lead speaker for the opposition on the industrial relations legislation. I thank him for that.

Under those circumstances, obviously, we expect the government to not unnecessarily delay things. This is on goodwill, so we expect that both sides will do the right thing. If we are to achieve this in the recommended time, we expect both sides will play fair. It is probably my reputation that will be trashed if this does not proceed as proposed. We appreciate that the Leader of the House did not move a motion for early starts next week, and I accept that that may change if we are unable to live up to our commitments in the interim; we might end up negotiating an early start. I am quietly confident that we will hold to this agreement and will get to end this year in as good humour as possible—although it is Thursday, and I do like to ask a funny question or two on a Thursday! We will to the best of our ability try to maintain the dignity of the house.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.