

TEMPORARY ORDERS 40, 101, 146, 147 — STANDING ORDER AMENDMENTS

Discharge of Order

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [5.23 pm]: I move —

That order of the day 1, 2019 Temporary Orders, be discharged from the notice paper.

We have had a very interesting and long week. I do not want to hold up the house but I am sure that people will want to contribute to the debate on this matter. As members are aware, this temporary orders motion has been on the list for the business of the Assembly for a number of months. We have now entered the second half of the year and, as members are aware, probably one of the most significant pieces of legislation—the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill—is about to be debated in this house in about a week. I am sure that bill will attract significant debate, concern and interrogation by members of this place.

I will provide a bit of history. As we know, the Procedure and Privileges Committee produced a report that made some recommendations to the Parliament, and we debated that back in March—how time goes quickly. Subsequent to that, a range of additional amendments have been listed on the notice paper by various members, including proposed amendments to the grievance proposal; an issue around member's statements and time limits; and an amendment by the member for Darling Range that proposed to refer the recommendations back to the Procedure and Privileges Committee for further consultation or discussion. Of course, that can happen at some point in time. The Procedure and Privileges Committee is responsible for determining its own business. Amendments to the temporary orders from the members for Churchlands, Vasse and Dawesville have also sat on the notice paper. Back in March we spent some time on this and it attracted—as expected—a range of views, some of which were very strongly put. At the time, there was quite a lot of emotion in the house particularly around the issues of breastfeeding and bottle-feeding. There was also some debate around issues associated with family-friendly practices that members would like to see in this place, including things such as family-friendly rooms and the culture of how a place like Parliament views children. Those matters brought on quite a lot of debate. We know that the procedures of the house—the hours and other matters—do change from time to time. But I recall the member for Riverton's comments about how the norm or the convention is that the outcome is determined by a negotiated agreement.

The government has a program of legislation that it seeks to pass through Parliament over the remaining nine sitting weeks that I think we have. At this point in time, the government's position is that it is now not appropriate to progress the recommendations because it will take up ongoing time. Unfortunately, agreement has not been reached on a number of the matters. I regret that to be honest. It is unfortunate that agreement was not reached on matters such as the increase in the number of private member's statements or to allow for an extra grievance. I understand that the opposition wanted the extra grievance to be entirely for itself. The government's position was that the speakers on grievances should alternate. We did not reach agreement on that, but I do not want to get into a debate about all the reasons why. Moving to discharge essentially means that we will not address this matter this calendar year. There is nothing to say that the Procedure and Privileges Committee cannot revisit these issues. That is the determination of that committee.

The one thing we need to do is to look closely at the allocation of space for children. I think that is one of the priorities. I think everyone is in agreement about that. Most modern Parliaments, certainly a number of Parliaments in Australia, particularly the federal Parliament, have a designated family-friendly space. That should be our priority. Of course, that is not a matter for the chamber; essentially it is a matter for the Presiding Officers and indeed the staff. I think it is the most important priority. Whatever our position, this place is peculiar.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: And full of peculiar people!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The member for Dawesville can say that but I could not possibly say that. One makes their own judgement.

It is a peculiar place in that it has some elements of uniqueness. For example, when we debate the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019, there will potentially be sitting times over and above what is seen as a normal parliamentary sitting time and we will see strange things, such as people sleeping in their offices, because Parliament may sit for a significant period. It is not that we have not seen that in the past; these things do occur. For regional members, which is what I am —

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: Hear, hear!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Exactly.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: It's a long, long way!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I had my family up last night for dinner and they travelled an hour and a bit to get here.

Mrs A.K. Hayden: An hour and a bit!

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: We will not get into a regional debate. Member for Darling Range, the reality is that if for example a child of a metropolitan-based member falls sick, that member can essentially be home within half an hour, usually, but even that depends on traffic. The reality for me is that if one of my kids falls sick, I would not get home for at least an hour and a half—even if I dropped everything right away. That is my reality. I am not trying to make this about me. I rely on my wife. If I am here, I am here. It is similar for other regional members, such as the member for Central Wheatbelt. The reality is that we cannot just drop everything and go home. We in this Parliament try to make the place acceptable, particularly for children and families. The culture has changed a little bit. I am not trying to sheet home blame because I do not think it is necessarily anybody's fault. We have to have a mindset about how we see a workplace or a place like this that caters for children. That is important. I see the family-friendly room a great step forward. I hope that that can be pursued with the support of the Presiding Officers and staff.

I regret having to move this discharge motion but we have not achieved agreement. Hopefully, in the next Parliament or earlier, consideration will be given to how we can achieve some of the things that a lot of members support and want to occur. Perhaps the grievances issue muddled the water in some respects because that caused disagreement. I will not hold up the house. I know that there will be pushback from members on the other side of the house. I caution members that we must deal with this motion before we rise this evening. That is the motion I have put and we will have a discussion about it now.

MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville) [5.35 pm]: The opposition will not oppose the motion to discharge. It is a bit disappointing. I am certain that the Leader of the House has probably grown wary of continuing to move and postpone the temporary orders time and again.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's been a bit like Groundhog Day.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It has. On my count, it has been deferred or postponed to a later day's sitting 30 or 31 times. I will not hold up the house too long. The member for Darling Range is very passionate about this issue and wants to make a contribution. From the opposition's perspective, it is an unfortunate reflection that the hard work of the Procedure and Privileges Committee could not be realised. A survey was given to all members in this place in November 2017—gosh time flies when you are having fun!—and 85 per cent of members provided a range of different responses to some serious issues that were raised. As the Leader of the House rightly pointed out, those issues related to the times that we sit and to what became the very heated and emotional debate about strangers on the floor, which, of course, referred to female members having the ability to breastfeed in the chamber. There were issues about grievances. Of course, the member for Churchlands managed to organise a deal with the government, but that deal was later reneged. A range of issues were very important. The Leader of the House raised a good point. This is a peculiar place and trying to explain standing orders to anybody outside of Parliament is an impossible task. I certainly appreciate them more now that I am in this chair. I certainly did not appreciate them too much when I was working for the former Premier because I do not think he was too concerned about them. Having sat in this chair, I now appreciate more that standing orders govern every aspect of the operations in this place. There was a chance to move forward and look at a number of different reforms. It has been a fraught and dragged-out process. I cannot provide the opposition's comments without saying that it reflects the mismanagement of the house more broadly speaking. It has been a bit of a mess. This week has been a classic example, and an unfortunate one at that. The Leader of the House said that we will get to the very important voluntary assisted dying legislation in the next sitting week, I suspect. On Tuesday, we sat until 18 minutes to one am. On Wednesday, we sat extended sitting hours and, of course, we are sitting later tonight than what we would usually on a Thursday tonight. With that in mind, I will not hold us up much longer. On Tuesday, we did not progress past drilling down into one clause. I think that reflects a lack of appreciation from some ministers. They need to respect the opposition and the processes of this Parliament. It is bit disappointing that a deal about grievances could not have been set. That is one of the more upsetting things because we need anything that gives the opposition more time to raise issues with ministers, and grievances, and private member statements are an important part of that.

On the issue of the family room, the Leader of the House raised an interesting point. I am not in a position to talk, because at this point in time, to the best of my knowledge, Michelle and I have no children.

Dr D.J. Honey: Is there something you want to tell us?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: No, not yet. And I do not know whether it will be so public if and when, member for Cottesloe! It is not something I can speak to. However, obviously we work in a very harsh environment. It is a robust environment that is at times hostile, all in the pursuit of trying to make the state a better place. With that, we must sacrifice certain aspects of our lives. I listened to the member for Mandurah's story about the distance he travels to see Donna and the kids and I sympathise absolutely with him. There is a need to look at what that might look like in this Parliament, but it has to be balanced with the need to hold the government to account and if that sometimes means longer hours, that is part and parcel of the process. In my second estimates hearing, I was accused by a member opposite of being too aggressive in my line of questioning with an agency CEO. That is the role and the

place we are in. It is a hostile place at times. If there is a need to modernise, that should be looked at on balance with the role we play as legislators. We will not oppose the motion to discharge. I was looking forward to moving a motion to discharge to force the issue because I sensed that the Leader of the House was growing weary of continuing to postpone debate.

Mr D.A. Templeman: It's aged me!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I would not suggest that.

I appreciate the house's indulgence. The opposition will not be opposing this motion.

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [5.40 pm]: I will be brief, too. The Nationals WA will not oppose this motion, but I have to echo the member for Dawesville's comments. We are disappointed. Given that there has been lengthy debate in this house on quite contentious issues related to this, it is disappointing that we are not going to proceed with the changes that, if agreement had been reached, would have been better for the procedures of our house. I note that one of the reasons for discharging this is that a contentious piece of legislation is coming and we will need to spend time debating it. If we cannot agree on standing orders within which we all must operate, I wonder how the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill 2019 will move through the house. I am not anticipating that members will be antagonistic, aggressive or unhelpful, but it is interesting that that is one of the reasons that this motion has been moved today—there is not time to continue those negotiations. I mentioned the processes that have been occurring in the other house. I concur with the member for Dawesville's comments that there seem to be some challenges when the government is dealing with the opposition to get through contentious issues.

Some good work was done by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. As a regional member, I have a property in the metropolitan area. I do not drive home to my electorate in Northam, where my home is, after Parliament sits. I know that there are members who live on the outskirts of the metropolitan area and probably drive just as far to get home. I get to choose where I stay when I am in Perth, so I choose to stay close to Parliament. When we have these debates, there is something I am cautious about. Although we may try to make this a more family-friendly place and have a more normalised workplace, for regional members, that will mean the thought of having extended sittings beyond Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays or a larger number of sitting weeks. That would mean that we would not have the luxury of being able to be in our own homes or electorates. On Wednesday nights, when we think we will rise at a normal time, everyone in the metropolitan area who is within a reasonable distance of their electorate can be home or at an event. On the other hand, I am not anywhere close to my electorate, so I have no possibility of doing that. We are caught between wanting a more family friendly and normalised workplace and wanting to be home in our electorates and balance the work of this Parliament. It is unfortunate that we will not get to the point of having a debate about those things.

I think there was discussion about the potential for us to have members' statements and further extend the 90-second statements. Having been a member of the other place, I found that a really useful opportunity to raise issues outside of the debate of the house or a formal grievance. It is simply a good space in which to raise those issues. It is a shame that many members on the backbench will not get the opportunity to do that. Something has been lost on that front by the government not being willing to negotiate with us and progress that change. That being said, we will not oppose this motion. I think everyone wants to go home, so I will sit down.

MRS A.K. HAYDEN (Darling Range) [5.44 pm]: I rise with a bit of disappointment that this motion has come on at the end of a very long sitting week. This week has been a perfect example of why some of these things needed to be incorporated.

I understand why the Leader of the House has brought on this motion at 5.30 pm at the end of the sitting week, but I think the timing is a bit unfair because it does not give us the opportunity to provide a proper response. I note that during the legislation we dealt with previously, I was getting the giddy-up from government members to sit down and stop talking, so I rushed through my contribution to the third reading debate. I could have gone a lot quicker, but I was heckled from the government benches. Noting that everyone was tired, I thought that I would appease them and sit down.

Ms L. O'Malley interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I get heckled non-stop from over here.

We had to rush through serious legislation and this motion was brought on at the last minute with the hope that it would go under the radar and disappear. I think that is disrespectful to this place, but I will move on with some constructive criticism. I was with the Leader of the Nationals WA and the member for Hillarys in the other place. We reviewed the standing orders, and it was a long and in-depth process. All members got to see what the committee put forward and to discuss it. That went on back and forth for a couple of months. It brought out the

best standing orders for that place. Standing orders are not about politics. We are talking about our working environment and the environment for the other staff in Parliament. I think we need to sometimes put aside our political issues and not use debate on standing orders for political reasons so we do the best for this place and everyone who will come here afterwards. The standing orders are not just for us. They are for future members of Parliament. They are serious and need to be done with consultation. I feel that that did not happen. The consultation process was not there before the motion was brought to Parliament. From the report I read, I think the Procedure and Privileges Committee did some great work. But that report was not duplicated in the proposed standing orders that were tabled in this place. They were tweaked by the government of the day to suit its needs and agenda without consultation with other members who sit in this place. The standing orders are not for one party. They are for every single person who works in Parliament House. That is not just the privileged members of Parliament; it includes the people who support us every minute of the day that we are here. When government brings in legislation it should not put its political bias on it. It should do it after proper consultation. I ask the next group of people who try to draft standing order amendments to consult broadly and to consult as one—not as government and opposition—and for the betterment of Parliament.

I agree with what was said by the Leader of the House—that is, we need to become more family friendly. I will be one of the first people to say that. In my opinion, we need to reduce the number of sitting hours. One of the amendments was to reduce speaking time. That we can speak for as long as we do and fill up the time because we feel we have to creates delay. If we reduced speaking time, we could reduce the hours of time wasted. I believe that many hours are wasted in this place that could be easily fine-tuned. If Parliament were being run as a business, it would be bankrupt, because the hourly rate certainly outweighs the product we deliver at the end of the day. I really believe we needed to look at this a lot closer, and I encourage the next brave person who decides to bring forward amendments to the standing orders to consult.

I cannot go past the reference to members' statements. As the Leader of the National Party said, in the other place at the end of the night, members get a chance to speak for 10 minutes on anything they wish.

Mr D.A. Templeman: That is the adjournment debate, isn't it?

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: Yes.

I have been a backbencher in a big-number government, and a backbencher in a big-number government is to be seen and not heard—yet they do a lot of work in their electorates. They should be able to come into this place and raise their concerns, highlight something wonderful in their electorates or thank someone in their electorates other than in a 90-second statement. I honestly believe that introducing parts of these temporary orders would have been fantastic for this place.

The one I am really against, and I have been public on this, is breastfeeding on the floor of the chamber. It is not because I am against breastfeeding. I am not against babies being in Parliament; I think if a baby had a choice, it would not want to be in here. We need to be able to create a family-friendly place here. Before we jump ahead to allow members of Parliament to breastfeed on the floor of the chamber, why are we not addressing the real issues that are happening now with staff in Parliament? Why are we not looking at their family-friendly hours? If we want to set an example, just allowing breastfeeding on the floor of the chamber, which in my opinion is a political stunt, does not improve family-friendly hours. It does not improve women's rights and the ability for us to lead by example.

[Interruption.]

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think I am going to call the member for Cannington!

Mrs A.K. HAYDEN: I just went to Westminster with the member for Belmont to watch a debate on this very topic of making a workplace friendly for women and helping women, and I can tell members that there were people from many countries there and none of them saw breastfeeding as an issue. They said what would be more important would be friendlier sitting hours and having a place outside the chamber so that children can be here. We all understand that if someone's child is sick when it is school holidays or they have been picked up after school and dad or someone's wife is unable to look after them, or a crisis happens, we should be able to bring them to this place. Currently, we cannot do that, and I know that staff cannot do that. If the government is serious and legitimately wants to make this place more family friendly and to set an example, that is the area we need to start focusing on instead of just political stunts. The day this was tabled there were a lot of front-page photos with Labor members saying how proud they were of this big statement, but not once did they talk about the need to have children-friendly places in Parliament other than the ability to breastfeed babies. I see that it was used as a political stunt. If we are serious about doing this, let us make this place really family friendly. I will support any move to do that, but when we do that, please do not think it is just for members of Parliament. It is for the staff in Parliament House as well. Every time members of Parliament are given another perk, we are getting one more step out of touch with the everyday Western Australian.

I was fortunate enough to be able to raise my stepdaughter from the age of eight years. She is now 38 years old; I do not think she would like me saying that age in Parliament! I was fortunate enough to have my own business, so I was able to pick her up from school and take her to my business, and the people who worked with me were able to do the same with their children. We need to lead by example. I have to say that I was doing that in the 1990s, so if I was doing that in the 1990s and we cannot do that in Parliament now, we are way behind.

I just finish on the note that I believe the timing of bringing this debate on is a little cute. I would have liked the opportunity to speak, but I did not get it. Next time we look at the standing orders, maybe a more communicative and joint approach will see them get through.

MR I.C. BLAYNEY (Geraldton) [5.54 pm]: I will speak very briefly. I was on the committee that brought the temporary orders into Parliament, and I am very disappointed that the process seems to have stopped. I ask the government whether it considers bringing this back next year so we can have another go, because I am disappointed —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Once bitten twice shy!

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: No! We dust ourselves off and throw ourselves back into the fight. I think we do stupid work hours, and we make the rules that airlines, trucking companies or mining companies have to work under, and then we impose these crazy rules on ourselves and our staff. I find that quite strange. We govern everyone else, but we cannot govern ourselves properly. We could do simple things such as get rid of the automatic 10-minute extension. I do not think anyone needs an automatic 10-minute extension. If a member cannot make their point in 20 minutes, they should not be here. I think we should have more 90-second statements and grievances. I disagree with my colleague here. I could not care less whether people bring a baby in here to breastfeed. I suspect it would not be a very good place for breastfeeding, but if they want to try, it is all well and good by me.

We have been talking about small businesses today. We expect small businesses to constantly look at their operations and reengineer them so they can stay in business, because if they do not, they go out of business, yet here we seem unable to reform ourselves. There are lots of things we could do and we could do things more efficiently, but we do not seem to want to do that. I encourage the minister and the government to, hopefully, bring this back again next year.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [5.56 pm] — in reply: I thank everyone for their contributions. Let us go home; I am tired.

Question put and passed.