

Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr David Templeman; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Rita Saffioti; Ms Simone McGurk

**MINISTER FOR WATER — CHAMBER DECORUM — COMPLAINT—
PROCEDURE AND PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE REFERRAL**

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [4.04 pm] — without notice: I move —

That so much of standing orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Member for Central Wheatbelt, myself, to move the following motion forthwith —

That this house requests the Procedure and Privileges Committee to conduct an inquiry into the allegations raised by myself, the Member for Central Wheatbelt, against the Minister for Water in her letter to the Speaker last Thursday, namely that —

- (1) While myself, the member for Central Wheatbelt, was on her feet speaking to the motion to suspend standing orders last Thursday, the Minister for Water —
 - (a) passed between her and the Chair;
 - (b) was in very close proximity;
 - (c) seemed to lean in as he went by; and
 - (d) very pointedly looked directly at her; and
- (2) His behaviour was disconcerting and bordering on intimidatory.

Mr Speaker, I understand that I need to argue the urgency for moving a suspension of standing orders.

The SPEAKER: That is right.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: You just gave a ruling that this was the end of the matter. This motion would seem to fly in the face of your ruling. Does a motion need to be moved to dissent from your ruling for this motion to be valid?

The SPEAKER: I said I was not going to do anything, but it is up to members of the house to make a decision if they want to. It is up to the house to make a decision, not myself.

Debate Resumed

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The house has just heard your ruling on this matter and I would like to put on the record that as the member involved in this complaint, I would like the house to make a decision whether it needs to go to the Procedure and Privileges Committee. This was and has been an issue that caused me distress as a member of this place and I think that the standards of behaviour in this place should be the highest and we should be setting an example. If there is any question that that has not been upheld or adhered to then, as a house, we should set an example and send a message that we are attempting to ensure that all of our behaviours, at any point in time, are appropriate and that we are aware of the impact that our behaviours have on each other in our workplace. I am not a shrinking violet. I am not someone who is prone to worry about what is said in the heat of a debate. I am not concerned about what members say from their chairs. I am concerned that, even today, we have heard responses from members of this place undermining a complaint that I made legitimately and I uphold the complaint that I made. Those statements that I made indicate it was absolutely something that was disconcerting to me when the minister went past. It was unnecessary. Although I have no issue with any member on the opposite side having a robust debate with us across the chamber on issues, it was most certainly an action that caused me to take a step back and think, “Hang on, you are very close; you are too close.” It was designed to make me feel uncomfortable. I cannot let that go through to the keeper, Mr Speaker.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The member just said that an action from the member for Bassendean was for a particular purpose. She cannot do that. She is not inside the member’s head. She can say how she feels but it is not in accord with the standing orders that she can infer an intention. That is clearly a breach of the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: I do not think you can say what his intention was in his mind, member, so if you could rephrase that?

Debate Resumed

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Yes, I can, and I withdraw that. I am not trying to verbal the member; I am trying to express to the house how I felt last Thursday.

The events did, as the Speaker has just said, happen in a moment but I can tell members that, at the moment that it happened, it certainly registered with me that the member was too close and it was absolutely disconcerting.

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There was no purpose for him, as far as I am concerned, to be as close as he was or for him to be looking at me as he exited the chamber. I watched the Premier and the ministers discount this complaint over the weekend. If this were a workplace of any other nature, and I know this is a special workplace where we have different rules of engagement, but we should feel free and be able to stand up and have a debate without feeling like our personal space has been invaded or that other members of Parliament are intimidating us.

I think the statements in the house today have been appalling. The Minister for Women's Interests said that I have made up a complaint because someone else told me to. That is undermining what I consider to be an extraordinary, valid complaint to you, Mr Speaker. I tried to follow a procedure last Thursday, which was entirely appropriate. I raised it with the Speaker and sought your advice. I then heard members of the government, over the course of the next few days, discount it, I can only assume, because of the relationship that they have with the member for North West Central. Essentially, the statement has been made today that I am making a complaint because the member for North West Central asked me to do it. I can assure members that that is absolutely not the case. I am well and truly able to make up my own mind and well and truly able to understand when I feel uncomfortable in my own workplace. That is exactly what happened last Thursday. If there is not a strong statement from this Parliament in relation to this matter so we can return to some degree of civility in this place then clearly, without some resolution from the Standing Committee on Procedure and Privileges, the type of behaviour that we have experienced since two o'clock today will continue. This is not the example that this chamber should be setting; it is absolutely not the example that I think the people of Western Australia expect from our elected members.

It is a robust environment. We expect to be tested—absolutely, Mr Speaker, and I take no umbrage at any of the comments that I get from members opposite, in this place or externally. I have thick skin; I have been here for a while. But I will tell you what: when I feel uncomfortable in my workplace, I will absolutely make a statement to that effect, and I will seek to do it through the appropriate platform.

That is why we came to you as the Speaker. Mr Speaker, you will note that we even discussed the notion of having the Minister for Water and me sit down in a mediated meeting, which was rejected by the Minister for Water. At all points, I have tried to move through this process —

Point of Order

Mr D.J. KELLY: The member is misleading the house. I did not reject the notion of mediation; as Speaker, you well know that.

The SPEAKER: Minister, I will not get into the point, but I said, “Will you have mediation?” and you said —

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: I beg your pardon?

Just let the member have her say. The minister will get the chance to have his say.

Debate Resumed

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I will not be mocked in this place for making a legitimate complaint. I am appalled, as I have said, that members opposite think that I would fabricate a very serious issue. I understand the ramifications this has and knew that when I raised the complaint. It would have been easier to walk away, but that is not the example that any one of us should set.

Standing Orders Suspension — Amendment to Motion

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House) [4.12 pm]: I move —

To insert after “forthwith” the following —

, subject to the debate being limited to 20 minutes for government members and 20 minutes for non-government members

Amendment put and passed.

Standing Orders Suspension — Motion, as Amended

The SPEAKER: Members, as this is a motion without notice to suspend standing orders, it will need the support of an absolute majority for it to proceed. If I hear a dissentient voice, I will be required to divide the Assembly.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA) [4.13 pm]: I move the motion.

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Mr Speaker, you will be aware that I raised this matter with you last Thursday afternoon immediately after the suspension of standing orders was completed, and I sought your advice on how that matter could be addressed. I raised the issue almost immediately after it occurred. I had been on my feet in the chamber; I had been sat down a number of times in the five minutes that I had been on my feet. As I was on my feet, the Minister for Water passed between me and you, as the Speaker, and as he passed by, I raised concerns about how close he was and the fact that he looked very pointedly at me and made me feel uncomfortable, and it was bordering on intimidating.

I was happy to take the Speaker's advice that there would be a process undertaken to take evidence, I suppose, in an informal manner, from both me and others who may or may not have witnessed the incident that I raised. I know full well that such situations can be "he said; she said" situations. I am not canvassing the Speaker's decision not to take it any further. I am, however, asking the house to consider that there are questions still unanswered, and I am very concerned about responses that the government and individuals within the government, today and over the course of the weekend, have raised in terms of saying that I fabricated the incident and that we are doing it for political reasons. That, to me, is the very reason why people do not raise complaints of this nature in the workplace. It is extraordinarily offensive. We are not all mushrooms; I do not think anyone would question the fact that if I raise something, or if I see something that I do not believe is correct, I am doing so because I absolutely believe it. I say to anyone who has not been watching what has been happening on the national stage for the last four months that they should go and have a look at it. Whether I feel uncomfortable, or whether I feel intimidated, or whether it was a small and unnecessary gesture that made me feel uncomfortable, I felt uncomfortable. I do not think any member in this house needs to feel like that. I am happy to come to this place, I am happy to be criticised, and I am happy to have members opposite pull apart our policies and our behaviour in our electorates; we expect that. This is a robust environment. But I expect that when one member of this place says that they felt uncomfortable, it should not be mocked by those opposite.

This does not mean that I discount anybody else's experiences. I heard what the Minister for Transport said; I am sorry that happened.

Ms R. Saffioti: No-one cared.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Well —

Ms R. Saffioti: No-one cared! It happened to me all the time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Minister, I was not —

Ms R. Saffioti: You all did it to me when I was pregnant!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Minister, I was not —

The SPEAKER: Minister, please.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

One injustice does not deserve another is all I would say.

Mrs M.H. Roberts: Hundreds!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Whatever it is, Minister for Police. Those injustices that you believe occurred, and may well have—absolutely; I am not debating it.

Mrs M.H. Roberts interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Police, Minister for Transport, I want to hear this in silence.

Mr P. Papalia: Two rules.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Tourism, I call you to order for the second time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Members opposite feel aggrieved about things that have happened in the past. I am telling them now that I felt aggrieved and uncomfortable in my workplace last Thursday. I can tell members that it was not a political fabrication; it absolutely was not. I was on my feet; I was trying to make a point. We were having a debate about live export and it was heated. In the middle of that conversation, when the incident occurred, I clearly recall thinking, "That is too close. What is this member doing?" I then took it up with the Speaker. I appreciate that the Speaker took it seriously and provided the opportunity for me, the minister and others who were witnesses to provide feedback.

What was most disappointing was the reaction that members opposite chose to pursue over the weekend. It is disappointing because it is exactly the reason that anyone, no matter how big or small a complaint is, thinks twice about making a complaint in the workplace. I am prepared to wear the fact that most will now say, "Well, she can't cop it; she's not tough enough", and all those things. It is not about me personally; I have a thick skin and I do not

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think they are valid arguments, but it did happen, and I would very much like the Procedure and Privileges Committee to look into this and make sure that we, as parliamentarians, are setting the highest standards of behaviour, because that is what the people of Western Australia expect.

MR D.T. REDMAN (Warren–Blackwood) [4.20 pm]: I want to lend my support to this motion, and to get some resolution to the issue that played out last Thursday, and has just been described by the Leader of the National Party. There has been a fair bit of commentary since then. I take the comments that you have made today, Mr Speaker, about your investigative response to the letter that was written to you by the Leader of the National Party, but I make the point that these are just findings. You have made some findings and, as far as I am concerned, they are findings, and you have made the comment that you are not going to take this any further.

Therefore, what options are left to a member who feels aggrieved about an action that happened in this house to get some sort of resolution? Standing order 109, as I understand it, provides an opportunity to put a position on privilege. The other option is to put it to the appropriate organisation that deals with these matters in Parliament; that is, the Procedure and Privileges Committee. It is more than reasonable to refer the matter to that committee. There will obviously have to be some changes to that committee. We know that one of the witnesses was the member for Roe, who is on the Procedure and Privileges Committee. A process can be worked through so that the matter can be appropriately heard without any form of bias, so I am sure the Procedure and Privileges Committee can manage issues like that.

The public is looking in on the decision-making authority for the laws of this land having to resolve an issue of harassment that has been raised, and having to take appropriate steps to sort it. It probably would not be hard to put two and two together over some things that have happened over the last four or five months. I remember seeking some advice from some very good friends of mine in very high positions on boards in Western Australia—very senior ladies who have a lot of respect in the broader community. I sought advice about whether they would raise issues of harassment and intimidation in the workplace. Just about without exception, the response was that they would not, because they felt that the cost was so high for the process that they would have to go through. Others will make judgements about whether the costs have been high for the people involved with those issues over the last three or four months. That is the very reason a decision-making body such as this house—the platform where we build the laws of our land—has to get this right. The only option we have available is to put this to the Procedure and Privileges Committee, and have that committee consider it. There has been no resolution to it. You, Mr Speaker, have made some findings, and you have made the point that you are not going to pursue it any further. We believe it should go before the Procedure and Privileges Committee to consider the matters put forward and whether any steps or options should be put forward as recommendations to this house and for the house to have some sort of resolution to it.

No-one in this place would not want to send the right signals from the Parliament of Western Australia to the broader community to say that it is okay to raise these issues. We should be able to raise them without fear or favour of the outcomes or the processes following from that. That is what this motion is doing. I call on government and opposition backbenchers to support this process, put this matter before the committee, have the committee consider it and come back with a recommendation, and go from there. That is about the only process that we have to follow. I do not believe that raising this issue satisfies particularly the member for Central Wheatbelt and others in the findings that are made, because that is all they are. It is not a resolution to the matter. It still sits there. Putting it to a committee to make recommendations to the Parliament might be a resolution.

I hold the view that issues like moving in front of members are quite difficult. I remember when I first came into this place, I do not think we ever moved in front of members. I think it was banned, full stop. There might have been a change in the rules. Members used to be able to move behind the seats, when I first came into this place, so it was actually possible to avoid a speaker. Now we have members reasonably regularly passing in front of people. The judgement, even from the Speaker's findings, is that a step has gone a bit too far, and we need to have some sort of resolution to it. I think it is more than appropriate to be able to put it to the Procedure and Privileges Committee to actually resolve it.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [4.25 pm]: I support this motion —

Mr M.P. Murray: You hypocrite!

The SPEAKER: Minister for Sport and Recreation, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I was probably in the best position to see the minister, when he was crossing the floor.

Mr P. Papalia interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Tourism, I call you to order for the third time.

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Mr V.A. CATANIA: Firstly, what I do not understand is that there is a perfectly good door behind the minister where he currently sits, and often when he walks across the floor I get verballed on the way out. I was looking at him all the time to see what would come out of his mouth. When he walked straight, going towards the door here, behind me—as I explained to you this morning, Mr Speaker, and explained to you on Thursday after the incident occurred—he moved his right leg in a forward motion with his head, and opened his eyes and made a gesture moving forward. I tried to raise two points of order. In the second point of order I said that the Minister for Water moved his head forward towards the Leader of the National Party. I have used the words “feigned headbutt”, and if members do not know what a feigned headbutt is, it is to pretend, be insincere, to fake, to sham—that is what I believe the Minister for Water did. He might not have been intending to headbutt the person, but he moved his head in a motion that was going forward to the Leader of the National Party.

Ms S. McGurk interjected.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Women’s Interests, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The intimidation and bullying, and the character assassination by the other side against me, because I have actually stood up and said that this is not welcome, is inappropriate behaviour; it is threatening behaviour, not just to a female member of Parliament, but to any member of Parliament. The intimidation and bullying that occurred, firstly from the Premier on the Friday morning with his interviews in the media to try to hurt my credibility, and dismiss an allegation that was pretty serious, because it was me, a former Labor member, shows that the hatred towards me has made members opposite blind, and has not allowed the leader of this state to make the correct judgement. That is the real problem here. Nevertheless, members opposite should put aside their anger towards me, when they see the video footage of the reaction on my face, and those of the member for Roe and the Leader of the National Party. I believe there were more witnesses who may have seen what happened. Clearly, something happened, whether it was a feigned headbutt or a movement towards the Leader of the National Party. It was intimidation. That is why we need the Procedure and Privileges Committee to inquire into it. Clearly, something happened. Whether it was a feigned headbutt or a movement forward, there was clearly something that the Minister for Water did. What is really disappointing is the response at question time by the Minister for Women’s Interests. The constant attack on me personally for bringing this issue to the floor of the Parliament last Thursday is concerning. The words from the Premier was that he did not see it, so it did not happen. Really, in this day and age—if he did not see it, it did not happen—that is what is really concerning. The Minister for Water has not apologised, because clearly something happened. He knows that something happened, because he looked up and on the way out he said some words that I will not repeat in this house.

Mr D.J. Kelly: I called you a dill.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: He kept on going.

The SPEAKER: Minister for Water, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Clearly, something happened. Clearly, there was intimidation by the Minister for Water. The personal attacks and saying that this has been fabricated by the Leader of the National Party or me, are clearly intimidation and bullying tactics to try to deter us from telling the truth. This needs to go to the Procedure and Privileges Committee, because that is the right thing to do, to make sure that we get to the bottom of it, because clearly something happened.

MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.30 pm]: Once again, the government does not like to get up to say anything and perhaps present an opportunity for rebuttal of the opposition. I am pleased to stand on behalf of the Liberal Party to support this motion. When these sorts of issues are debated in this place, it is very tempting for us to go back over our personal experiences to look for incidents in which we felt aggrieved, incidents in which we recall feeling intimidated or whatever it might be. However, issues from the past in the context of this motion are, quite frankly, just not relevant. The house has before it a request from the member for Central Wheatbelt to have the issue that concerns her dealt with by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. It is very brave for a female to stand up in this place, an arena of politics, and say, “Actually, I was vulnerable and I was intimidated by the actions of another individual”. When women do that, people point the finger at them and say that they are just not cut out for this job. That is the risk that we take when we stand up and decide to be accounted and request of this Parliament the standards that we have legislated into every workplace in Western Australia. That is what the member for Central Wheatbelt is asking for with this referral to the privileges committee. We can talk about what happened when we were pregnant, what happened when my husband was ill and other issues. We can bring them in if we want to, but the fact remains that the member for Central Wheatbelt said, “I felt intimidated by these actions. I want the privileges committee to investigate them because I want to have some kind of recourse. I want the privileges committee to look into it and make a determination and to verify that what I felt was valid and that what I experienced happened”. Victims of violence from right across the state say that the biggest challenge is getting victims of crime to stand up and ask

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for help because they do not want to feel more vulnerable, they do not want to be ridiculed and they do not want to be dismissed. They do not want to have someone say, “She made that up”, and be made to look like an idiot. That is what they do not want to happen. That is what is happening to the member for Central Wheatbelt and this Parliament needs to hold itself accountable to the laws that it passes to protect people in those circumstances. I hope the government supports this referral—I really do. It is not a witch-hunt—it is about standards. Someone has been brave enough to stand up and say, “No. We deserve a better standard. I deserve a better standard. I deserve to make a contribution in this place without somebody entering my personal space and making me feel intimidated and making me feel like I have to step back”. Every single one of us deserves to feel like that in this place during debates when we represent our constituencies. Every single one of us deserves to feel like that and to feel protected. There is a big space between me and the member for Central Wheatbelt. Why on earth was she obscured from my vision for a period of time during this incident? Why does anybody have to not walk right down the middle of a big wide corridor like that?

The SPEAKER: Be careful what you say because we have video evidence. Making statements like that might be slightly misleading about the facts.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I was saying that the member for Central Wheatbelt does not sit far from me. I would like this matter to be investigated by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. I commend the member for Central Wheatbelt for being brave enough to stand in this place and say, “No. I felt intimidated and it was wrong and inappropriate. I want it taken further”. Every single member in this place should stand behind her and applaud her bravery and what it takes to say, “No, I felt vulnerable. I am a member of Parliament, I am the Leader of the Nationals and I was vulnerable”.

MR M. MCGOWAN (Rockingham — Premier) [4.35 pm]: I will speak briefly to this motion because I know that a range of my colleagues want to make a contribution. I note, Mr Speaker, that you received a complaint on, I think, Thursday from two members of Parliament and that you decided to undertake an inquiry into the matter. I note that over the last couple of days or thereabouts that you, Mr Speaker, heard evidence from nine people, perhaps more or less, about this matter. I also note that today you made a ruling, a decision based on the evidence that you received about this matter. I think the ruling you made, which was based on the evidence that you received, outlines the view of —

Point of Order

Mr D.T. REDMAN: On a point of clarification, the Premier is referring to a ruling. I did not think that this was a ruling that you made.

The SPEAKER: It was a statement that I made—statement or ruling. I made the statement and the ruling. I do not think that is a point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr M. MCGOWAN: Mr Speaker, it was a statement you made earlier after hearing evidence about this matter. The statement you made summarises the issues and the findings you have come up with as a consequence of hearing evidence from the various people involved. The most serious allegation made was the one made by the member for North West Central about a head movement or a headbutt movement, I think was the wording used. Mr Speaker, I will quote from the statement that you made earlier today, which reads —

I find the minister did not move his head in the member’s direction to any significant degree. The member herself does not say this occurred.

Mr Speaker, after hearing evidence from the Leader of the National Party and other members of Parliament, you indicated that the evidence indicates that no such head movement by the Minister for Water occurred. Mr Speaker, you have determined on that basis that the matter is now dealt with and is now closed. It would be open to the government to support this motion and, therefore, undermine your ruling, Mr Speaker, which I think would make your position very difficult; or we could amend this motion to incorporate the statements by the member for North West Central, which you have found to be, by your own statement, inaccurate—in fact, untruthful—or we could incorporate the behaviour of some Liberal MPs in recent days, including some intimidatory behaviour and language in this house, and allow a free-for-all to go on. However, I think it is far better that we get back to governing in the interests of Western Australians. Mr Speaker, we accept that you have heard the evidence, examined these matters and made a statement or ruling. It is time that we get on with the business of governing Western Australia.

MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport) [4.38 pm]: I rise to speak to this motion. This is sometimes not an easy place. This is sometimes a difficult place with the debates that happen and the structure of the chamber. We have an old-style chamber in which we are very close to each other. Sometimes many of us—

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men and women—leave this place feeling a little battered and bruised from the debates. That is very, very fair to say. What is clear about this incident is that the member for North West Central said something that was not true. He said it in the lead-up to a by-election and there was a strategy to relay that through a press conference on the Friday before the by-election. We know what happened—it was a strategy set to undermine Labor.

I want to talk about intimidation and bullying in this place. Only a week and a half ago, I got up to make a speech during private members' business about Darling Range. There were five men on other side of the chamber. Two of them leant forward and were interjecting constantly. It took a point of order from the member for Cannington to stop them. They would not stop. I called on the Acting Speaker to help me. Both members leant forward, they both pointed their hands and would not let me speak. I could have taken that incident to the Speaker more formally. There are constantly incidents in this place. If this is the new bar, members opposite had better watch it every time we stand up during question time, because they will not be able to look at us badly or interject on us. That is the new bar. As I said, a week and a half ago, the members for Bateman and Churchlands both leant forward, and there were only men on the other side of the chamber—I looked up and there were five men—and they looked at me menacingly, and I was unnerved.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: You had your go. Let the minister have a go.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The member for Scarborough said that if women feel intimidated, they should have the right to say it. I have the right to say it: I was unnerved by that incident. What did the member for Scarborough do? She attacked the accuser. She just came and attacked me. That is exactly what happened. If this is what members opposite want to do in relation to debate in this place, as I said, I will refer that incident. The member for Cannington who saw that I was unnerved stood up and took a point of order. We all have issues that we are dealing with, and sometimes we feel more vulnerable than in other situations.

I will go through again what I have been through in this place. As a new member in this place, I stood up to give my maiden speech and the former Premier heckled me, and he did not stop for eight and a half years. People ask me why I come into this place and act like I do in an attacking way. I do it because I had to survive for eight and a half years—constantly. Members opposite who were here know it. The constant attacks on me by the previous Premier were awful. As a new member, in my maiden speech, he heckled me, and he did not stop for eight and a half years. No-one from the Liberal or National Parties supported me. It was far worse than anything I have seen in this place now. No-one supported me. Let us go through the worst incidents of it. When I was going through IVF—I have said this in this place but no Liberal Party person has apologised—and I was going through a miscarriage scare and the former Premier was attacking me about I cannot remember what, the current Premier and I had a chat: I told him that I could not cope and did not want to come to Parliament, but I did not want to stay away, because I knew what they would have done. When I missed a day of Parliament, they attacked me for it. The current Premier supported me every step of the way and went to the former Premier and said, “Rita is in a bad spot and you need to give her a break.” He outlined what was happening. Do members know what the former Premier said? He said, “I can’t keep the dogs off her.” That is what happened.

Another colleague said to me that I should not have done it and that I should never have shown fear. Guess which colleague that might have been? Alannah MacTiernan said to me that I should not have done it and that I should never show fear, because when Labor women show fear in this place, we get destroyed. We cannot be vulnerable. When I announced taxi reform, I was throwing up in my office. Someone might have seen it. I was throwing up because I caught a virus that morning. I still did the crossbench briefing. I did the caucus briefing. I ran outside to the south entrance—Lisa Baker saw me—and was throwing up, but I wanted to come in to question time because it was taxi reform. On the same day, my dad was rushed to Royal Perth Hospital. It was one of the worst days of my life, and on the radio I heard the member for Scarborough attacking me for not being in this chamber.

Several members interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Let us go through it. I look at Grace and how beautiful she is, but I cannot get those days and what the previous Premier did out of my memory. When I had Grace and asked for some support about feeding her in this chamber—remember that?—I went through hell. I had a baby and who supported me? Nobody. The member for North West Central went on radio —

Mr V.A. Catania interjected.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: You did. He did to kick me about it.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He did. I was going through a very emotional time, as first-time mothers do. I was vulnerable, and the members for Jandakot and North West Central went on radio to kick me about it. That is what they did. So, sorry we are taking this stance, but, in my view, there have always been two rules in this place. It is because

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we are the Labor Party and we can debate. I stand up and debate strongly, but do you know what? I had to survive. I got better and better because the former Premier—I am not glad, because at the time it was pretty hard—made me stand up and defend myself every day of the week. The intimidation, the bullying and the personal attacks—he called me everything under the sun. When I tried to get some assistance, the former Speakers gave me none, because they were conservative Speakers on this matter.

Yes, member for Scarborough, I do get emotional about this. The member may think it is irrelevant, but it is not irrelevant, because this is a hard place and we all have vulnerabilities in our personal lives on any given day, whether it is relationships, sickness or death. We all have vulnerabilities. What I will not stand for is that we are never allowed to have those vulnerabilities on this side. Another more recent example is when we did not give answers back for upper house question time. That was because I was carrying my sick father back home from Hollywood Hospital and I could not get access to clear some questions. They went and did a video on it.

I understand that this is a tough place. Member for Central Wheatbelt, I understand that. I understand that we all go through tough times, but, as I said, to try to undermine the Minister for Water in this way, led by the member for North West Central, is completely out of order. If this is the new bar, I am saying that I will raise points of order and refer things to the Speaker every day, because there is not one day that the Leader of the Opposition does not interject on me and laugh at me. Look at him now.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: He cannot help himself. He cannot help insulting us and laughing at us. I do not feel good about that.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I take issues of harassment and bullying very seriously; I really do. Sometimes this is not a great place to work and we go home and we feel it has been too tough. That happens a lot of times. You wonder: why do we get so combative? The reality is that this is the Parliament of WA and we are all trying to do the right thing, but if this is to be accepted, there will be many, many further referrals. To be honest, compared with previous Speakers, that the Speaker has already taken this issue so seriously as to interview everybody is a much greater step than what the two previous Speakers would have done. I think the Speaker has taken the issue seriously and has undertaken an investigation.

MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Child Protection) [4.50 pm]: It will be hard to top that contribution, because the previous member has not only put in context the complaints that have been made, particularly by the member for North West Central, but also what has to be endured by individual members of this house, frankly, of all persuasions day in and day out.

I want to talk specifically about the complaint and now the motion that this matter be referred to the Procedure and Privileges Committee. The member for Central Wheatbelt is claiming that the minister passed between her and the Chair, a matter that happens I do not how many times in the course of a sitting day in the traffic of this house; he was in very close proximity, another matter that happens every day; he seemed to lean in as he went by and very pointedly looked directly at her. That is the member for Central Wheatbelt's allegation against the Minister for Water. As I understand it, Mr Speaker, those are exactly the terms that were previously referred to you. Your statement, as the Premier has pointed out, states —

I find that the Minister did not move his head in the Member's direction to any significant degree. The Member herself does not say this occurred.

Let us be clear what the member for Central Wheatbelt is claiming and the extent to which this is supposed to be intimidating—perhaps to her it was. But let us put it in context with what is experienced every day in this chamber by all of us, across the chamber, between each other all the time. Let us put in context what is being claimed and has already been heard by you, Mr Speaker; you have interviewed witnesses and made a statement to Parliament. Let us put that in context. The aggravating factor has been the member for North West Central making claims about a so-called headbutt, of which you find there was no veracity and nothing to substantiate that claim, that got a very extensive run in the media in the lead-up to a by-election. It has been incredibly inflammatory to the claims by the member for Central Wheatbelt. We need to take a step back and look at the claims being made by the member for Central Wheatbelt. They are very mild. They may have been intimidating to the member, I do not know, only she knows that, but she asked the Speaker to investigate it, he has investigated it and he has handed down a statement. That should be the end of it.

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MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police) [4.52 pm]: I certainly respect the contributions of the two former speakers, my colleagues, on this matter. The fact is that this is a robust place and emotions often run high. I have been here longer than everyone and if I had to rate this on what I have seen in here over that period and if I thought long and hard enough and reflected on some *Hansard*, there were probably a thousand or more occasions in which significantly bad things have happened in here, and some of them to me. I remember being told to stick to my knitting in the first week or two I was here. I have had people comment across the chamber during debate about my appearance, amongst other things, and a lot of very nasty stuff. I have seen people in here visibly upset—we all have. Has anyone here taken any action? Do members remember when I introduced the bill to give women the right to breastfeed in public places? Adele Carles, the then member for Fremantle, got to her feet and she was talking about her own personal experience. She was interjected on by Christian Porter, the then Attorney General, who was very dismissive of her concerns. He was dismissive of me, he was rude to me and I anticipated that. She was a new member of the house. She was talking from the heart and she was bawling her eyes out at the back of this chamber. It was on national television and it was publicised, but did anybody in here refer that to the Speaker? Did anybody refer Christian Porter's behaviour, his attitude or his patronising whatever? No, they did not. Did anyone refer the squirrel-gripping incident that we saw to the Speaker? I do not think so. There is a fair dose of hypocrisy from members opposite.

I conclude by saying that we all need to show each other a much higher level of respect. That does not require anything being investigated by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. It can, of course, consider the standing orders of this house and it can consider a range of matters, but we should show each other, male or female, a considerable amount of respect. I remember the kind of mocking that the former member for Vasse used to do to all members of this house and it was disgusting.

Division

Question put and a division taken with the following result —

Ayes (18)

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

Noes (34)

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

Question thus negated.