

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 13 March 2019]

p1100a-1117a

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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

*Amendment to Notice of Motion*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [12.18 pm]: I seek leave to move my motion in an amended form.

Leave granted.

*Motion*

**MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Leader of the House)** [12.18 pm]: I move the motion standing in my name on the notice paper as notice of motion 1 under “Business of the Assembly”, with the date amended to 19 March 2019 —

That for 2019, the following temporary orders be adopted and commence from 19 March 2019 to the end of 2019 —

- (1) Standing Order 40 be amended by inserting the following sentence at the end of the standing order: “A stranger does not include a member’s baby being breastfed by that member.”
- (2) (a) The sections on “Motions” and “Other Bills” in Standing Order 101 be amended by —
  - (i) deleting “60” as the allocated time for the “Mover”, the “Premier or one member deputed” and the “Leader of the Opposition or one member deputed” and substituting “45”; and
  - (b) The section on “Third reading” under “Other Bills” in standing order 101 be amended by deleting the words of the section and substituting the following —

Third reading —

Mover .....	30 minutes
Premier or one member deputed .....	+30 minutes
Leader of the Opposition or one member deputed .....	#30 minutes
Any other member .....	15 minutes
Mover in reply .....	30 minutes

+ If not a Government bill  
# If not an Opposition bill
- (3) (a) Standing Order 146 be amended by —
  - (i) deleting “Four” and substituting “Five”; and
  - (ii) inserting the following sentence at the end of the standing order: “The fifth grievance will alternate between government and opposition each week.”; and
- (b) Standing order 101 be amended by deleting “7” and substituting “6” in the section “Grievance debate (S.O. 146)”.
- (4) (a) Standing order 147 be amended by deleting “Once” and substituting “Twice”, by deleting “six” and substituting “five”, and by deleting “90 seconds” and substituting “two minutes”; and
- (b) Standing order 101 be amended by —
  - (i) deleting “90 seconds” and substituting “2 minutes” in the section “Members’ statements (S.O. 147)”; and
  - (ii) deleting “Maximum of 6 members.” and substituting “Maximum of 5 members, twice weekly.”

Obviously, we are commencing the debate on the proposal for changes to the standing orders of this chamber, influenced, of course, by the report that was handed down late last year by the Procedure and Privileges Committee. Of course, Mr Speaker, the report, which all members will have read, was the result of a consultation process that I understand was undertaken by you and members of that committee. The results of the survey and consultations were presented in the form of a report that was presented to the house late last year. The government has considered the various recommendations and comments in the report. The response is set out in today’s notice paper. It is always interesting when we seek to alter the standing orders of the chamber. Changes to the standing orders have

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occurred over time. There are more experienced members than I who perhaps will reflect on that later in the debate. Standing orders are amended from time to time to reflect various needs and changes. I am aware that some amendments will be proposed as part of this motion, and I am looking forward to that debate. The debate will, potentially, be strongly put.

I will move quickly through some of the key elements that are presented to members via the proposed temporary orders. I need to highlight an important concept: one of the strong issues that has been raised from time to time, and was acknowledged in the report but is not captured in the proposed changes to the standing orders, is the culture of this place in terms of being a family-friendly place, particularly a welcoming place for children. It is very important for us to consider the uniqueness of this Parliament. Parliament is a unique place. This chamber is a unique part of this place. Considerations need to be weighed up as to their merit. We need to perhaps remind ourselves that when we are talking about being family friendly, we are talking about the Parliament in total. It is also important that we acknowledge that the modern world is different from what it was 20 to 50 years ago when this place was populated predominantly by males. We also must acknowledge that the Parliament itself contains a significant number of employees who of course have important jobs to carry out as staff of the Parliament. From my perspective, as a father of four young children, I would hope that the Parliament would always be cognisant of those people who have younger children, including teenage children, who might from time to time need to be here for a whole range of reasons. I am sure that that will be canvassed as part of the debate today.

Part of the Procedure and Privileges Committee's considerations involved giving consideration to providing a room to accommodate family members, particularly young children or babies. Those of course are not captured in this because they are not related to the standing orders of this chamber, but I believe they are very, very important considerations that should be pursued further. As Leader of the House, I am very keen to progress those issues because I think it is important to look at how we can provide a safe and welcoming place if needed by members and their families, particularly those with young children. I would like to see that pursued. I am very happy as Leader of the House to work with some members to achieve that. I am aware of course that the availability of rooms in this building is an issue, but I think there is an opportunity to explore the possibility of having a lounge-type room that caters for people who have those needs. From time to time members' children, including teenage children, need to come to this place to be with their parent. Those considerations also should be part of the discussion. Again, those are not captured in this motion because they are not related to the standing orders of this place. It is important we understand that the standing orders of this place is what we are seeking to amend via these temporary orders.

The date amendment—I thank the opposition for granting leave—means that if amended temporary orders are passed at the end of this debate, they will commence at next week's sitting on 19 March 2019. I will now briefly go through these. I will not speak in great length about the particular items; it is more appropriate in some respects for others in this place to do so. Part (1) of the motion is to amend standing order 40 to essentially allow a member to breastfeed their baby in this chamber. Part (2) relates to speaking times on motions. The proposed speaking time changes are tabled on the second page of the notice paper, under which the mover of a bill will be required to deliver that speech in 45 minutes and the response by the lead speaker or member deputised as lead speaker will also be 45 minutes. The proposal also highlights a reduction in third reading speaking times. It is important to note with regard to second reading debates that there was some discussion in the report to delete the 10-minute extension of time. That was not supported. For various reasons, that will continue and will not be amended as part of the second part of this temporary standing order.

I highlight that the temporary standing orders will be in place, if passed by this chamber, for this calendar year only. Obviously, there would need to be a process either at the end of this year or the beginning of next year to assess the effectiveness or otherwise of these changes. That is up to the house to consider at the end of this calendar year.

The third proposed amendment relates to grievances. Standing order 146 currently allows four grievances, with seven minutes for the grieving member and seven minutes for the responding minister or parliamentary secretary. The proposal is to reduce the speaking time by one minute for each, so that would reduce to six minutes for the grieving member and six minutes for the responding minister or parliamentary secretary. There is also a proposal to increase the number of grievances held on a Thursday morning. The government's position is that the extra grievance created should alternate between government and opposition. I expect to be lambasted of course by the leader of opposition business because of a so-called deal. The government has considered that it is appropriate that the extra grievance be alternated between the government and the opposition. We also note the current pattern of behaviour of the opposition, which was exposed towards the end of last year and has occurred every single sitting day this year, to seek to suspend standing orders after every question time. By the way, those suspensions have been agreed to. In fact, there was an extra one after question time during the last sitting week. Effectively, the opposition has gained an extra 45 minutes to an hour, which interrupts government business. I do not think opposition members have a strong point to put if this is their practice. It has been a habitual practice since the end

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of last year and they are continuing the pattern this year to seek to suspend standing orders after every question time. Government business time is then taken up. I know there will be a discussion about a so-called deal or whatever. Quite frankly, the government believes that opposition members' current practice demonstrates that their position will be to seek to suspend standing orders, so we do not believe we should also give them an extra grievance and not alternate between government and opposition speakers. It is also important to note that the number of members in this place reflects that the opportunity to deliver a grievance alternately should be given to the larger government membership. The proposal that stands on the notice paper would mean, as I said, five grievances a week of six minutes' duration and the extra grievance alternating between government and opposition members.

The next part of the motion, part (4)(b), relates to what we fondly call 90-second statements or private members' statements. Of course, these private members' statements currently occur at 12.50 on Thursday afternoons before the lunchbreak. The proposal is to increase the number of statements from five to 10, and, obviously, there will be an equal number for opposition and government members. However, the time for members' statements will be increased from 90 seconds to two minutes. The extra five statements will be scheduled under the order of the Speaker. Mr Speaker, we would strongly recommend, and I have discussed this with the opposition, that those extra private members' statements be scheduled at 7.00 on a Wednesday evening, immediately once private members' business has concluded. I agree with the opposition that even though we could argue that they are private members' statements so they should be in private members' time, I am happy to support the opposition's view that they be heard after private members' time. I would strongly suggest, Mr Speaker, as this is something you will make a decision on, that Wednesdays at 7.00 pm is the appropriate time for these extra private members' statements to be taken. That will remind members to be ready for them. I would not like to be the Whip, quite frankly. I have been the Whip on both sides of the house for a significant part of my career in this place. The Whips will now be responsible for not only seeking extra grievances, but also seeking extra private members' statements. I hope we do not get to a situation at seven o'clock on a Wednesday when the Whip suddenly finds that members have either forgotten or they suddenly say they are not ready. That is something for you to consider, Mr Speaker, but as I said, I would strongly recommend it and I think the opposition agrees with me. That is all I wanted to say at this stage. I will make some closing comments at the end of the debate on the motion.

I want to remind members that my view is that standing orders and conventions are very important in this place. I think it is also important that we recognise the importance of the pairs system, which, in some respects has in the past been a little—not abused, but members need to be reminded that the pairing system is there for very important reasons, such as a member's personal need to be absent from this place. Legitimate absences should always be accommodated. I think we take for granted the importance of the pairing system, but it is actually very important. Of course, it becomes even more important when numbers in this place are much closer. I will not labour the point but I had an experience when I was due to attend and give a eulogy at a funeral early on in the Gallop government period, and a pair was not granted from the other side. I will not go into the detail of that but I was very disappointed. I think we should be very mindful that the pairing system is an important convention in this place that we should not take for granted.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** Could I ask you a question?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I really enjoy interjections from you, member for Geraldton; I am happy to do that.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You are too kind. The practice of pairs being able to be called off at any time—I have seen that happen —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is what happened to me.

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** That's the unfairness of it. If you've got out the door and switched off your mobile phone, nothing can happen, but when pairs are called off, it gets to the point at which there is no point in having pairs if you're not going to give them out.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Everything is treated on its merits and depending on certain circumstances, but I think, generally, from my experiences as a former government and opposition Whip, the convention is important, certainly for issues related to ill-health and personal family circumstances. These considerations should never be canvassed for why a pair should not be granted.

I am also mindful that we have to be a little bit careful sometimes that we do not become wound up in talking about ourselves. The general punters out there do not really —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** Care?

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I think, in general, they would not consider some of the things that we get wound up about as being of priority or importance. I think that is a reality. When we perhaps talk about ourselves all the time, it does not necessarily increase the status of how we might be perceived by the general public.

With those words, I am happy to have moved the motion. Obviously, there will be some debate about the issues that are proposed.

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Leader of the Nationals WA)** [12.38 pm]: I thank the Leader of the House for those comments. I do not intend to speak at length on the amendments to these standing orders or belabour the point but there is a motion on the notice paper in my name and we intend to move it. I thank the committee members for their work, including the survey and the feedback that they sought: the member for Albany, Mr Speaker; the member for Maylands; the member for Geraldton; the member for Pilbara; and the member for Roe. The committee report made some pretty commonsense observations and the member who spoke previously outlined that it will be a trial and that we seek to test some of the things that might make this a more family-friendly environment. Things can be done slightly differently and we do not always have to do exactly what we have always done. That being said, this place has significant convention and history and we need to be respectful of that.

The amendment on the notice paper in my name simply reflects the viewpoint that the Procedure and Privileges Committee put in relation to breastfeeding and bottle-feeding. It is one that is shared by our party room, which is why we made the decision to draft an amendment and put it to the house.

The committee report refers to allowing members' babies to be fed in the chamber and reads —

Question 2 of the survey proposed:

- (a) Breast feeding to be permitted in the Chamber.
- (b) Breast feeding mothers to lodge a proxy vote with the Whip

The report states that in response to the survey —

Part (a) of this question received a 'Yes' response of 31 and a 'No' response of 14.

Part (b) of this question received a 'Yes' response of 37 and a 'No' response of 9.

Obviously, the current practice is that babies are not fed in the chamber because they would be viewed as a stranger in the house. It would appear that the conclusion of the committee is that the survey received a strong positive response from members, even to the point that it states that the inability to feed babies in the chamber is currently a barrier to young women entering Parliament. I am not sure that I entirely agree with that, but certainly I agree with the sentiment that there could be a widening of allowances for mums and dads or primary caregivers in this place as part of a trial. The final paragraph of this section reads —

Accordingly, the Committee recommends the first option

That was for breastfeeding to be permitted in the chamber. However, the committee went further and said that it had several responses that bottle-fed babies should also be included. The report reads —

The Committee concurs that not only should bottle-fed babies receive the same consideration as breast-fed babies, but that bottle feeding would also enable fathers who are members to engage more actively in parenting their children.

That is the key passage. There is one element that I think the committee may have overlooked; that is, there are mothers who cannot or choose not to breastfeed, so that is another group of people who will be excluded from participating in this in the chamber if we are trying to create a family-friendly space. It is not only the fact that since the standing orders were created, fathers are very much more engaged in their primary caregiving role. Different types of families are far more common in our community these days, and that is reflected in the desire of our party room to make sure that we do not discriminate against or exclude people who have a family and might not be able to participate in this trial. Any mother—I am not one—knows that being able to breastfeed or not being able to breastfeed is a very sensitive issue for families. There are women who cannot breastfeed their babies or who choose to bottle-feed their babies. If that is the case, they should not be excluded.

In this trial we are seeking to make this place more family friendly. As I said, I do not think the proposal reflects the reality of modern-day families. In discussions outside this place, there has been consternation about this proposal in general, not just the breastfeeding versus bottle-feeding debate. A viewpoint has been put that this chamber is simply not a place for a child. I think that we are all grown-ups, although our behaviour sometimes belies that fact, Mr Speaker. We should all respect the space in which we conduct our business on behalf of the

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people of Western Australia. I come to this place—I am sure everybody does—with that starting point. It should not be a place for members of Parliament to exploit their families for electoral favour or to make a point. I am sure that not one parent or caregiver would do that if they were given the option of utilising the amendments to the standing order. We would expect—we must expect—that all the provisions would be used appropriately and with good judgement. I cannot imagine that any parent would expose their children to something that is detrimental to them or their colleagues as we conduct our business in this very important place.

I believe and have faith that we can approach this matter from a sensible and reasonable position. I am unsure why we would trial an amendment to the standing orders without trying to make it as inclusive as possible. Certainly, that was the discussion that we had around our party room table. Two young fathers in the National Party participate significantly in the care of their family, and young children at that, and that point was made strongly when we were discussing this issue.

The amendment that I will move shortly seeks to create a level playing field for all primary caregivers with dependent children. We hope that members of the house consider the matter favourably. It is in line with the committee's recommendation or observation, and I can see no harm—in fact, only positives—for the house if it is supported.

*Amendment to Motion*

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That being the case, I move —

In part (1) —

To insert after “breastfed” —

or bottle-fed

**MRS L.M. HARVEY (Scarborough — Deputy Leader of the Opposition)** [12.45 pm]: The Liberal opposition is very much supportive of the Nationals' amendment on the notice paper for the reasons that the member for Central Wheatbelt outlined. However, I will put a few comments on the record. The Liberal Party room was unanimous in agreeing to support these amendments to the standing orders, but it has concerns about particular aspects of them.

With respect to breastfeeding a child in the chamber, the argument can obviously be made that anybody could bottle-feed a baby but we cannot extract a breast from a woman to have that baby fed elsewhere. A mother needs to have her baby beside her when breastfeeding is required. Having breastfed two children, I have to say that this chamber is often a very adversarial place—when we are in a division, for example—and babies absorb emotion, so to bring a baby into this chamber during debates in which people are getting fired up, particularly during a division when there is a lot of movement and activity, would be somewhat counterintuitive in supporting a child. In fact, in certain times I would actually call it almost akin to child abuse given the way some tempers flare during particular debates in this place. But that said, I completely and absolutely support the sentiment of providing whatever may be required to help women and men nurture their children while they continue to perform their duties.

It is true that not every workplace provides this opportunity for people, but the argument can be made that Parliament needs to set the example to the rest of community about having family-friendly work practices. Certainly, the standing order about a stranger being in the house precludes a baby from being present with their mother in this place. That is discrimination against a woman who may be breastfeeding her child by disallowing them access to this place of work with their child who is 100 per cent dependent on them for food and nurturing. That needs to be corrected. I acknowledge that not every workplace provides that privilege for women. Perhaps there may be a time when those opportunities will be available without there needing to be a discussion in this Parliament about whether it is a good or a bad thing. It should just be an expectation that women who are breastfeeding their children should have an opportunity to do so in every place of work in Western Australia. That is not the case.

I heard members make reference to the member for Darling Range, who has been heavily criticised by some members opposite because of her stance. The point that the member for Darling Range has made repeatedly—unfortunately, she is not here to participate in the debate today—is that she does not believe it is appropriate for female members of Parliament to be afforded a privilege that is not afforded to women in other workplaces. That was her point, and it is a valid one. By an amendment to the standing orders, we are going to provide the opportunity for members of Parliament to breastfeed or bottle-feed their children in this chamber. That privilege is not available to every other female worker in the workplace, and that is a shame. I accept that it would not be practical in some workplaces. It is a shame that that opportunity does not exist, but we do have an opportunity to set an example.

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Last week, I pointed out—this is part of the reason that we agree with the Nationals WA's amendment—that the other chamber was debating the Human Reproductive Technology and Surrogacy Legislation Amendment Bill, which enables single men and same-sex male couples access to surrogacy. That bill passed through this house on the voices and is now being debated in the other place. The fact remains that if a single man or a same-sex male couple accesses surrogacy and has a baby, they will have 100 per cent responsibility for the care of that child and the child will need to be bottle-fed. On the one hand, we will have laws that allow for equality of access to surrogacy for same-sex couples, which is a fine thing, yet they will be discriminated against in this chamber because they will not be allowed to feed their children, should they need to, unless we agree to this amendment that allows babies to be bottle-fed as well. We find ourselves in a bit of an anomalous situation.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** I am sorry. I will take the Minister for Transport's interjection.

**Ms R. Saffioti:** What age is bottle-fed—what is the limit?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Minister for Transport, I will respond. There is no age limit for breastfed babies. Some women breastfeed their children until they are four or five years old. That was not a practice that I chose for my family, but the fact remains that there is no limit on what age a baby or an infant —

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, you will have your chance to speak.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** The temporary orders do not include an age limit for a breastfed baby, neither is there one for a bottle-fed baby. If a baby has to be bottle-fed from birth because someone cannot breastfeed them, that baby's requirement for nurturing and bonding is exactly the same as that for a baby who is being breastfed. When babies are being fed and held, that is a very important time for children to bond with their parents. We make that point because we are trying to make this a level playing field. The amendment is not anti-women or anti-breastfeeding—that is ridiculous. It is about providing mothers and fathers an opportunity to nurture their dependent children in this chamber free of any discrimination.

I have no further comment to make on this issue. I think I have rounded out a range of different views. However, I put it on the record again: our party room was unanimous in its support of members to be able to breastfeed their babies in this chamber, including women who cannot breastfeed, to bottle-feed their babies and, indeed, single dads or same-sex couple dads, or any fathers who may have sole responsibility or shared responsibility for raising their child.

**MS R. SAFFIOTI (West Swan — Minister for Transport)** [12.53 pm]: I will speak to the amendment. Initially, I endorse the comments of the Leader of the House; Minister for Culture and the Arts, on the Labor Party's position on this issue. There is one consistent message in relation to this issue in this place; that is, members on the other side are playing politics with this issue. When the times are of need, they play politics, and they continue to play politics. I am not going to sit here and listen to the hypocrisy of the other side.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on my left, you were heard in silence. I expect the same for those on my right.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I am not going to listen to the hypocrisy of the other side. The National Party and the Liberal Party when there was actually a test, when there was actually a need, laughed in our face. That is what they did. To come in here and to try to play politics on this issue is an absolute disgrace. Members opposite do not understand that again it shows how they have not considered this issue seriously over time. Let us go through it. Their hypocrisy is breathtaking.

On 7 January 2010, I had my daughter Grace. People may recall that. I went to the then Speaker and asked that if there was a division and I was breastfeeding my daughter in my room, would I be able to come into the chamber. Note that I did not have leave, so I was in here in February. I had a young daughter. You were talking about bonding—this is what you denied me, member for Scarborough. This is what you denied me. I went to the Speaker and I asked: if I was breastfeeding my daughter in the corridors or in my room and there was a division—not for a normal debate—would I be allowed to bring her into the house? That is what I asked, and not for general debate, not for question time, but if that situation arose. He said no.

Then the comments by the then member for North West —

**Mr V.A. Catania** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Honestly! The former member for Jandakot, Vince Catania, said in *The Sunday Times* —

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** Jandakot?

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Both of them—the National Party and the Liberal Party. There were articles and articles. One article states —

But National Party MP Vince Catania argued that the Assembly was no place for a baby.

“My son comes to Parliament House, but I don’t know that bringing a baby into the chamber is a wise move,” Mr Catania said.

“Often, when there is a vote, there is a lot of disagreement and tension—it can be an emotional time where you are debating legislation that ultimately changes people’s lives.

“There is a lot of shouting and I’d think the loud noise would frighten the baby.

“Imagine have a screaming baby in the chamber when you are trying to debate vital legislation.”

That is what he said. While I was at home struggling with my firstborn, you guys had a field day and went on the radio and in the paper. The former member for Jandakot, Joe Francis, said that he would be happy to call out a stranger in the house if I were to take my baby into the chamber. He said that he would do it because taking a baby into the chamber is against standing orders and the baby would have to be taken out. He could not think of any working mother who got to take their baby to their place of employment for the day and that he knew many struggling parents who had to pay for child care if they wanted to keep working. He asked why should politicians be different!

When there was actually a test, when it was not a hypothetical with you playing politics, you actually insulted a new mother and walked away from your responsibility. So I am not going to sit here and be lectured by any of you on this issue, because time and again you have demonstrated an inability to take this issue seriously. You play politics with it all the time. That is all you are trying to do here; and in relation to the bill in the upper house, I know the right and left factions of the Liberal Party are struggling on all these issues.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Scarborough stood up and said, “Our support was unanimous.” I wish the member for Darling Range was here. On 27 September 2018, she said —

‘Community expects 100 per cent attention, not breastfeeding’

...

She said WA’s Parliament was already “extremely family friendly”, ...

“My question is—do you expect someone who’s in a court, defending you, standing on their feet, to breast feed?” ...

“Do you expect someone at Coles or Woolworths standing at the cashier scanning your groceries to breastfeed? Do you expect a doctor giving you a medical consultation to be breastfeeding while doing that?

“My assumption and my view, and I believe many other people in the community’s, would be no.

“You would expect that person to give you 100 per cent of their time.”

The member for Scarborough has just stood up and said that the vote was unanimous, yet a member of her party in recent months has completely rejected it. Where were the Nationals, the Liberal Party members and all these so-called promoters of rights at that time? They were laughing. Then the member for Scarborough stood up today and said, “We want to support men nurturing their children.” She has mocked the Premier’s wife and children through social media—absolute vile attacks, in the gutter—and now she has stood up and said that she supports men nurturing their children. She has not apologised for using social media to attack the wife and children of the Premier.

That is what she has done.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** In the gutter!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Scarborough has been attacking his wife and children. That is what she has been doing.

**Mr S.K. L'Estrange:** Prove it.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Prove it? Okay.

Liza Harvey, the member for Scarborough, said on the radio —

I mean, isn't she in a privileged position? She is volunteering in the community like hundreds and thousands of Western Australians do every day ... The reality is those positions have been created by this government, and by virtue of Mrs McGowan being in those positions, she then has a justification to be travelling with the Premier more often than not.

The member was attacking her role! She was undermining the importance of literacy —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, you had your chance to talk.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** She went on —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** I commended her. Read that bit out.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** No, no. I will talk about how —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Members opposite have to be kidding. The member for Scarborough has been on TV and social media attacking the children of the Premier. That is not acceptable.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! You had your chance to speak.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** She comes in here and talks about people nurturing. On social media, she stated —

Taxpayers should never be forking out for the Premier and Ministers to take their kids on holidays!

The member for Scarborough retweeted a picture of his wife and kids—attacking them through social media.

*Point of Order*

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I think that we are talking about an amendment to the motion to do with bottles. How long can this member go on?

**The SPEAKER:** It is not a point of order. The member for Scarborough went a bit to the side. I think it is just a general debate and I think the minister is doing the same.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Went down what?

**The SPEAKER:** You talked about other issues around this and this is what I think the minister is doing. She is putting her point of view on a motion, and we will hear it. But she will get back to the point.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Scarborough talked about fathers being nurturers of their young children. This is exactly the point that I am going on about. She talked about the need for fathers to bring their children to work and then she went after his wife and children. That is what she did—she and the Leader of the Opposition. She absolutely did. If we had done that to her, all hell would have broken out.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** No, it wouldn't.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, it would. Do not come in here and lecture us about family when the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA attacked me. Some members opposite are laughing, because they never cared. When I had my firstborn and the test was there, they mocked me and they loved it. They loved the pressure I was under.

I will give members another example. I was on a standing committee—the Public Accounts Committee—with the former member for Jandakot. The member for Gosnells remembers it. The former member for Jandakot purposely

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 13 March 2019]

p1100a-1117a

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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did not rock up to meetings so we would not have a quorum to finalise the Serco contract for Fiona Stanley Hospital. He purposely did not do that! When my babies were a few weeks' old, I had a teleconference from my study with the two of them to try to make sure that we had a quorum so that we could do the committee's work. The former member for Jandakot purposely did that. Do not lecture and take the high ground in here. When the true test was there, members opposite failed. They laughed and they mocked. They made it very difficult. They talk about bonding, but their actions impacted me and my child.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** You're making it up.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**The SPEAKER:** I beg your pardon, member for Cottesloe. I ask you to withdraw that.

**Dr D.J. Honey:** What? That she's making it up?

**The SPEAKER:** Do not push your luck!

**Dr D.J. Honey:** I withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** I call you to order for the first time.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member for Cottesloe—sexist, sexist. That is what it is.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** That is an offensive personal comment that I would ask that the member withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** What was offensive?

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Calling me a sexist. She said the member for Cottesloe —

**The SPEAKER:** Who said it? I did not hear it.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The minister.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I do find the comment sexist.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! We have a point of order. Minister, can you withdraw?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I withdraw.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** This shows that when the test is there—do members see what they do? They attack the women talking about their emotional time when they had their children. That is what happens.

**Mr I.C. Blayney** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Geraldton!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** This is the double standard that is always in this place.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** You've got more front than Myer.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Pardon?

**Ms M.J. Davies:** You've got more front than Myer—seriously. I stood up and said that this is not a political issue. It is a debate for the house.

**Mr B.S. Wyatt:** That wasn't what you said on this side of the house.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** I had absolutely no idea what was going on—absolutely no idea.

**The SPEAKER:** Treasurer and Leader of the Nationals, I call you both to order.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The member said she had no idea. What was the National Party doing?

Several members interjected.

*Point of Order*

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** The Treasurer continues to badger the Leader of the Nationals across the chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** They were both doing it and I called them both to order. Treasurer, enough!

*Debate Resumed*

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**Extract from Hansard**

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p1100a-1117a

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** When I stood up and basically poured out the issues that I was facing when I had my newborn—my firstborn, after months of IVF—what did we get? We got the member for Cottesloe completely denigrating me when I explained my experience as a new mother. He said that I was making it up—that it was not a stressful time and that it is an easy time having a newborn when you are a member of Parliament without leave, as if that was an easy time.

When members opposite try to lecture us about family or anything, I do not accept it. I will not accept it because the living proof is that they turned their back on this issue when they needed to stand up. They enjoyed it, and they still enjoy it.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members, you were heard in silence. Minister, are you getting near the end?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes. I support the Leader of the House's motion today. I think it is a sensible way forward that gives breastfeeding mothers the ability to come into this place.

**Mr W.J. Johnston:** A right you were denied!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** It is a right that I was denied and then mocked for. Members opposite can think what they like. The Leader of the Nationals has not been in that situation. She does not know what it is like but she let her colleague mock me.

*Point of Order*

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** I seek your clarification, Mr Speaker. Are we debating the amendment, which is to add the words "or bottle-fed"?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, we are.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, we are. I am explaining why I am not supporting the amendment.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! When you are on your feet, you want the protection of the Chair, but you are just sitting there talking. Minister, can you bring this to a close, please.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Sure. We do not support the amendment. We support the proposals being put forward by the Leader of the House.

*Point of Order*

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Mr Speaker, we are not debating what the Leader of the House has put forward. We are debating the amendment. The amendment is whether the minister agrees —

**Ms R. Saffioti:** I just said it.

**The SPEAKER:** She has already said what she thinks. She is supporting the Leader of the House's motion.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Not "bottle-fed", though.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE:** Can we find out why?

**The SPEAKER:** I think she has just explained it.

*Debate Resumed*

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** As I said, and we may be speaking on this later, there are wider issues across Parliament. Although the focus has been on the chamber, many of us have experienced this situation with our young children. As I said, I have three children and they are not the quietest of children. I wonder who they take after! When I bring them to Parliament, it would be great to have a family room that can contain their energy and excitement so it does not spill over and infect everybody in this place, which tends to be the case. I do think a family room is needed and is very important. I have argued for that for a long time. The member for Morley will raise issues about the treatment of dependent children in this place regarding access and other issues. I am very happy with the sensible, commonsense proposals being put forward. In relation to bottle-feeding, it is important to note that the survey never contemplated that.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Pardon?

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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**Mrs M.H. Roberts** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Police!

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The survey did not contemplate bottle-feeding; it only included a question about breastfeeding.

**MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central)** [1.10 pm]: Is it not wonderful that both sides of politics agree with allowing women to breastfeed in this house and allowing members of all genders to use a bottle to feed their children? The Minister for Transport said that we do not support breastfeeding or support women in the workplace who want to breastfeed. We heard the hypocrisy that came out of her mouth. Members on this side of the house are ensuring that we have balance, and a fair and equitable workplace that encompasses fathers, mothers and people in same-sex relationships being able to bring children into the chamber to be bottle-fed or breastfed. I think we have come a long way in allowing that to occur.

The Minister for Transport's speech was the most political speech going around, given the fact that both sides of the house agree with the way forward. We on this side of the house are saying that we need balance. Perhaps one day we can allow the member for Perth to bring a child into the chamber and bottle-feed him or her.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Be careful, member, making comments like that.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** It was okay for the Minister for Transport to say that because the Leader of the Nationals WA does not have a child, she would not understand. That is what she said. Members opposite should not stand on their soapboxes and give us a lecture. We are moving away from politics and political parties here. We all agree with the proposal. I do not know the circumstances of the Minister for Transport. Why would I know about her circumstances?

**Mr D.J. Kelly** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Hang on a second; I gave you the courtesy.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** When we are on the opposite side of the political divide, we do not often know what the other person is going through. Did we know that the Minister for Transport had a baby? Yes. We did not know whether there were any other personal circumstances. The journalist asked whether I would allow children to be present in the house. I do not know. Given the passion of this debate and the loudness in the chamber, I do not know whether it is right to have a child here. If I was a father and I was able to bottle-feed a child, I would not do it in this house. That is my choice because I do not believe that that is the right thing to do for that child. I certainly would not listen to what the Minister for Fisheries has to say, so do not jump in, mate.

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** You're not my mate!

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I would not be your mate; you are right.

**The SPEAKER:** When you address a member, you address a member by his proper title.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Okay. We are really descending here.

**The SPEAKER:** What was your comment?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I said that we are descending with the debate that is occurring here.

**The SPEAKER:** Just get on with the debate.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** It is my personal choice not to bring a young infant into this house. That is my choice because from time to time we have heated debates when members have to get up and down. That is my personal view. That was my comment in *The West Australian* that the Minister for Transport referred to. That is my personal choice. There are certain circumstances, as the Minister for Transport explained. If she was breastfeeding in her room, watching the debate on TV and a division was called, the argument that she put forward is fair and reasonable—that she be allowed to bring her child into the chamber.

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** You've changed your mind.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** No. I am providing an explanation. It has not been explained before. I will go back to the question that was asked of me by the journalist. That was the response I gave. I think I made that quite clear.

The government is trying to make this political. It is trying to create a divide between the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party. What we see here—I hope the media reports this—is that we have consensus. We are

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saying, "Let's make sure that it is balanced. Allow everyone to be in the same position." If the Minister for Transport wants to debate the age at which a child—a stranger—can be brought into the house, let us cap it. Let us amend the age limit. That is what we should be doing in a mature way. We should not have a dig at everyone, because we do have general consensus.

When she brings up the Premier and the trouble with her family, I agree with the Premier.

**Ms S.F. McGurk:** Who is "she"? Who are you talking about?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I am talking about the Minister for Transport. The government is trying to create an argument and trying to make us look like we do not want this. That is not the case. When the Minister for Transport put forward her argument, she spoke about the Premier and having her family come into this place. As a regional member, I know how hard it is to see my family. I agree with the Premier. I fully support the Premier and every member trying to bring their family with them wherever they go, because sometimes we may not see them for weeks on end. That is not what we are debating; we are debating something that we all agree with. We all agree with these changes. The Procedure and Privileges Committee made the recommendation to allow members to bottle-feed. Government members are the ones who want to make it political by saying that only women can breastfeed in this chamber. That is not where we are in this day and age. The member for Scarborough also said that we are in the process of changing the surrogacy laws to allow people in same-sex relationships to have children. What happens in that case? We are encompassing everyone in a balanced way because every parent who has a young child deserves the right to look after their infant. The argument should be around the age cap, not whether a mother should be able to breastfeed and parents should be able to bottle-feed.

The Leader of the Nationals put it quite clearly, and I know a lot of mothers who are not able to breastfeed so they have to bottle-feed. There are a lot of reasons we should take the politics out of it and do what everyone basically agrees with. We should change the standing orders and let us trial it for 12 months and see how that goes. The only people making a political stand on this seem to be those members on the government side. This is one issue on which we have general consensus. Let us all be mature and support a family-friendly workplace. I am a father who had a young child stuck in a special care nursery for four weeks and was hassled by the Whip back in 2007 to hurry up and get back to Parliament. If members want me to talk about personal issues and the attitude of the Whip of the day and the pressure that was put on me by the party that I used to belong to back in 2007, I will. Undue and unnecessary pressure was put on me as a young father who had a child in a special care nursery for four weeks. A lot of members did not know that.

**Ms R. Saffioti** interjected.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** The Minister for Transport might want to talk about her personal issues but I am just relating my personal experience.

I agree with the Minister for Transport that this place needs to be a family-friendly environment. I remember that we talked about turning the old billiards room into a nursery for children. I cannot remember when that was. It was years ago. I think it was during the Carpenter government, back then. We have all had an opportunity to change the workplace environment in which we have all worked for a long time but it has not happened. We now have general consensus to allow this to start to become a friendly-family environment, so let us all work together. Would that not be something novel? Let us all work together because we have general consensus. Let us take the politics out of it, people, and support this amendment. If someone wants to move another amendment to cap the age, let us have that debate after we vote on this amendment.

**MRS M.H. ROBERTS (Midland — Minister for Police)** [1.20 pm]: I oppose the amendment put forward by the National Party. The problem with the member for North West Central is that, although he says that he wants there to be some consensus, he does not come into this place with clean hands, does he? We have heard the comments he made a few years ago. For the member for North West Central, it is all about him; he asks us to look at his particular circumstance and whatever. If he were genuine about raising his circumstance back then, I would have thought he would have had a little more empathy with the Minister for Transport when she faced her circumstance, when she was a mother who had given birth to a child she was breastfeeding. All that was obvious, not something that needed to be communicated to her. She came in here pregnant month after month, then she wheeled the baby around.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It was pretty darn obvious. It was also pretty darn obvious that she had chosen to breastfeed her child. Put one and one together and do not come in here with that falseness, because I cannot stand it. It is not all about the member for North West Central. He perhaps finds himself in different circumstances now that he is

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a dad and has kids and wants to make his own comments because he has a different perspective. I hope he has grown up a bit because the comments he made back then were repulsive and juvenile.

The member for Scarborough's whole argument centred on the theme of having an opportunity to set an example. In our work environment at Parliament we can set an example for Western Australia and all other workplaces. To me that says, "I'm all right Jack; we can look after ourselves better than other workers in Western Australia." Why should we have it better? Why should we set this very high bar when we say it is okay for men to bottle-feed in here when that is not permitted in most other workplaces in Western Australia? It simply is not. Is that allowed at police stations, fire stations, schools and hospitals? No, it is not. We are proposing a very minimal change that respects the biological function of women. That is the point I want to draw to members' attention.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Bateman!

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** As one of the only people ever in this place to have had a child and brought the child here without having had time off work and breastfed the child, I think I have a right to comment on this matter. I therefore say this: this place is already a very family-friendly workplace in which to have a pregnancy and a child. I had no difficulty with it. When people talk about breastfeeding in Parliament, the community reads that as the whole work environment. We are talking today about just the chamber. As a mother—not my first child—I was able to breastfeed in the courtyard, in my office, in the corridor, in the dining room, in the library; right throughout this building with the exception of the chamber. That already provides more privilege than most other workplaces. I do not like members of Parliament talking about their entitlements and I certainly do not think we should have entitlements better than those that other workplaces have. However, the reality is that we often hear comments in the community and from members of Parliament that we do not get sick leave; we do not get maternity leave; and we do not get long service leave, as some other workers have. That is all true, but when someone here is sick or has a baby, they have time off on full pay. Although I did not have maternity leave, I also did not—as I did with my earlier children—have to take time off without any pay at all. As it turned out, for the child I had when I was in Parliament in early July one year, I had no time off from Parliament. I do not want an award or a medal for that. I had great support from my family and friends. My husband came here on many days through the spring session of Parliament that year and he and others assisted me. Did I find not being able to breastfeed in the chamber a huge impediment? I think that is an issue.

I would say first about breastfeeding that I am a hugely strong advocate of breastfeeding. My private member's bill clarified for all time that women could breastfeed in public places. In this chamber at that time I was belittled by the then Attorney General, now the federal member for Pearce, as was the then member for Fremantle, Adele Carles, because we wanted to clarify this matter and we thought it was important. The then Liberal Attorney General thought that a breastfeeding mother should take a test case if she thought the law was in doubt. Imagine that! A woman has just had a baby; she is feeding in a cafe; she is asked to leave —

**Ms S.F. McGurk** interjected.

**Mrs M.H. ROBERTS:** It was a total misunderstanding of the mother's emotional vulnerability, her financial situation and a range of other reasons that a mother would not be out there taking a test case. This is an issue I have considered over many years. I have supported breastfeeding mothers' groups in my electorate and elsewhere. It is very important. I will not give a lecture here about the huge benefits of breastfeeding for children, including the health-protective benefits. There are also benefits for the mother not just in bonding but also physiological benefits. I will say this: we want all women, whether in Parliament or elsewhere, to be able to breastfeed and continue to breastfeed where possible. The fact is that if feeding a baby is supplemented with bottle-feeding, it is sometimes hard to get the child back onto the breast. That is a fact. Although I might not give members the best medical explanation of it, sometimes a baby will feel fuller and find it easier to get milk from a bottle than from the breast, so they start to prefer the bottle over the breast and will no longer take the breast. I think it is unfortunate to have to push a woman into that situation.

If I can perhaps go back to my experience and how I found it. There were times—I would say rare times—when the bells rang that I was either breastfeeding or about to commence breastfeeding. I made the choice, in accordance with the then standing orders, to delay the breastfeeding for two or three minutes if I was about to commence. If I was in the process of breastfeeding, I would detach the baby, give the baby to my husband or someone else, come into the chamber, vote for a few minutes and then go out. If the standing orders had been changed to permit breastfeeding, I would have had the option of bringing the child into the chamber, continuing to breastfeed and, in all likelihood, leaving straight after the vote. I think that is a sensible option that should be allowed in this place.

**Extract from Hansard**

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The National Party's motion suggests that the same should apply to bottle-feeding. The fact is that it is not the same. I am more than well aware that some women have difficulty breastfeeding; indeed, for medical reasons, some women cannot breastfeed. There may well be a circumstance in the future in which there are two fathers and not a mother. That is fine, too, but if those individuals found themselves in the same situation I found myself in, there would be no danger in not being able to sustain either breastfeeding or bottle-feeding in the longer term.

Someone else can bottle-feed the baby. Indeed, once a mother's baby is off the breast and using a bottle because they are perhaps six or eight months old and she has decided to wean them, often her partner will enjoy having that bonding time to feed the baby. From my perspective, the importance of allowing breastfeeding in the chamber is to allow for properly sustained breastfeeding. That is what is really at issue here, and that is why I strongly support allowing breastfeeding in the chamber.

The same principle does not apply to bottle-feeding. I do not think a lot of people have thought about individual circumstances, but as I have explained, if I were bottle-feeding my baby in my office or in the corridor and the bells rang, I could easily give the bottle and the baby to another person who could quite happily feed the baby for two or three minutes, and then I could go back and continue to bond with the child. The truth of the matter is a combination of two things. One is that I do not think the people who have put forward this amendment have actually properly thought through the issues; that is where I give some people the benefit of the doubt. With regard to some others though, I think they have seen an opportunity for cheap political gain, where they think they can out-Labor the Labor Party and somehow be more politically correct or whatever by saying that we should offer this opportunity to men.

At the end of the day, I come back to what I think is commonsense, fair and reasonable. I have explained today a clear biological difference. I have quite deliberately talked about the importance and benefit of sustained breastfeeding for the mother and the child. The same does not apply to bottle-feeding. We are talking about a division or a small amount of time during which a member will be away. They can either desist, as I did with the breastfeeding, or they can have somebody else fulfil that role for a few short minutes if necessary. I think that is reasonable and very much a step forward.

Beyond that, if we are going to allow bottle-feeding in the house, that is a different level altogether, and I think it would put us out of step with community expectations. I want to reiterate, loudly and clearly: we can breastfeed or bottle-feed anywhere in this place, other than in the chamber. This is a friendly environment for doing that. We can do it in our offices, the library, the courtyard, the dining room—wherever. It is not an issue of not allowing opportunities for bonding or family time here.

I am disappointed that this amendment to the motion has been moved, because I see it largely as just being about cheap politics. I think some members have jumped on the bandwagon without properly thinking it through. Those members should reflect upon what is appropriate and what occurs in the rest of the community. I do not think it is our job to set an example of having better working conditions than others in the community. We are privileged to serve in this house, but we come in here knowing full well what the expectations are. I remind members that we generally sit for only 22, maybe 23, weeks of the year, so there are many other weeks during which members are in their electorate offices and other places where there are no restrictions on either bottle or breastfeeding.

I conclude by referring back to the survey. Just because a majority of members surveyed on a particular issue want certain conditions, does it mean we should have those conditions? I would say not. I could survey a lot of police stations and hospitals; I could ask workers what they want. We could survey a workplace and ask, "Do you want to be paid more? Do you want better working conditions? Do you want to work fewer hours?" Most workplaces would say, "Yes, I'd like that, and that, and that." "Do you want some other perks?" People would say, "Yep, that sounds good." Just because people have been surveyed and a response has come back to say, "This is what we'd like", it does not mean that it is the right or proper thing to do.

We have to be very mindful that we are in a privileged position. As members of Parliament we do not give every other worker in every other workplace the conditions of employment or the pay that they would like. Ultimately, a balanced decision has to be arrived at. What is proposed in the motion moved by the Leader of the House is a balanced decision. I do not think that amending it is a balanced decision. I do not think it is necessary, and I do not think it is in line with community expectations.

**MS A. SANDERSON (Morley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [1.35 pm]: With lived experience of having a baby while a member of Parliament, I also rise to contribute to this debate. It is important to put on the record the experience of those of us who have done that, and those of us who will seek to do that. I am not supporting the amendment moved by the other side, and I ask the other side: where were members opposite during their eight and

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a half years of control of both chambers of Parliament? This issue arose at least twice over the two terms of the last government and no changes were ever made. I ask members opposite where they were then.

I had my second child while I was a member of the Legislative Council and it was extremely challenging, I have to say. It was not an easy experience for me. Of everything I have done in my life, one of the best things I have ever done is breastfeed my two children. I have been really fortunate to have been able to do that and to not have had any issues with it. My daughter breastfed until she was almost a year old and she weaned herself, and that was great. Upon returning to Parliament, we return to our duties very quickly; there is no maternity leave, so we need to return to our duties quickly, which is fine. I knew that and I knew what I was getting myself into. I was politely reminded before I returned that no strangers are permitted in the house. A chair was provided for me in the first-aid room to express, and that was considered adequate preparation for my return to Parliament.

My experience with my son of being a breastfeeding mother and expressing was that I spent hours and hours trying to express. As part of that, I had to undress and there is a whole lot of paraphernalia and material. It is a pretty private event. I shared an office with the member for Gosnells and often when I would go to the first-aid room to try to express in between debates or divisions, after having worked out with the Whip whether it was a good time for me to go, there would already be someone there because it is used by many people, so it was not available. The member for Gosnells was very, very accommodating—and probably a little scared to come into the office!—so I would use my office and have to send him a text to say, “I’m expressing, sorry. Just stay away for a little while.” I would then get dressed and go back up. Sometimes I was not even able to use my office or the first-aid room, so I would have to use the retired members’ room, which does not have a lock, so I would be waiting for some former member to walk in while I was pumping. I worked really hard at keeping my son breastfed, but after a couple of months he stopped breastfeeding because he got used to the bottle. He was about four months old when he stopped breastfeeding and it broke my heart because I had so little of that early time with him, so that was taken away from us.

The motion moved by the government is about supporting members to go back to their duties early on in that time when they are intensively breastfeeding, and people can be intensively breastfeeding every 30 minutes or every two hours; it depends on the baby. There is no set time frame. It is about supporting mothers and not discriminating against mothers in their duties as members of Parliament and in their roles as breastfeeding mothers.

That is what this amendment is. I am disappointed with the approach taken by the other side, particularly given its track record. I raised a number of times in the Council the issue of loosening the arrangements for returning mothers. The response ranged from the now member for Darling Range making lots of “tuts” and huffing and puffing and saying, “She’s raising this issue again”, to absolute objection from the other side. To be faced with this kind of hypocrisy and game playing is really quite galling, frankly. Instead of this being a celebration of progress in this place, it has turned into this—and that is because of your actions. It is not a bipartisan issue when you ring up *The Sunday Times* and tell them what you are going to do; that is what you did. It was on the front page of *The Sunday Times*. They did not bring this issue to the chamber or to other parties; they rang *The Sunday Times*. Let us not pretend that this is anything other than playing politics. I support the motion put by the government. It is absolutely the right motion with the right balance. A number of workplaces allow breastfeeding. We are example-setters. We are here to set examples to the community. Frankly, we often set a very poor example with our own behaviour and practices.

The point has been made a number of times about the overall work environment. What happens in the chamber is limited in terms of our ability to make changes. It is about the building and the culture of the building that we need to make change. I want to provide a current, live example for members to consider of how we can support working mothers and working parents in their roles as members of Parliament and as parents as well. My daughter is 12 years old. She has just started high school in the city. I also have shared custody of her, so she is not with me all the time, which makes sittings particularly challenging. I am not the only person in this place to have shared custody of children, but it makes sitting weeks particularly challenging. You really do not see them for long periods. I requested a security pass for her so that she could come up here on some Thursday afternoons after school—not every Thursday. She could catch the CAT bus up to Parliament, come and see me, do some homework and have a snack. We usually finish at a reasonable time on a Thursday; it is pretty predictable. It is so she can spend some time here. Under the current arrangements, she has to sit in my room and she cannot go to the toilet. She cannot go anywhere because she cannot get back into my office, and she cannot access the toilets. I requested a security pass for her so that when I am in the chamber, she can go through, go to the toilet, do homework and do what she needs to do. I was denied —

**Mr V.A. Catania:** Who denied that?

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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**Ms A. SANDERSON:** I am not going to go into details. I will not give my true feelings about the full response that I got, because I actually hope to work through this issue. But it was essentially, “No, there’s a security issue, a security risk”—with a 12-year-old girl. This is the kind of stuff that makes it really hard. The reality is that for that week, I had functions on Monday night, worked here late on Tuesday night, I got home at 7.30 pm on Wednesday and Thursday afternoon was the only time I would see her. Friday she goes to her father’s. That is the reality of when I could see her. I am not alone in that circumstance. Examples have been given of when some children have done this or that—and where do we draw the line? We cannot make policy because of one or two bad experiences. You cannot do that and you should not do that; it is bad policy if you are. I do not drink in the bar. I do not host guests in the bar for hours on end and let them rampage around the Parliament, as we hear occurs occasionally. I do not hold big, boozy events. This is the request that I have made. This is a request that would be a practical step for all working parents, not just women. That is the kind of cultural change that needs to happen, not just in the chamber, where we need to support parents. This issue has become particularly prevalent in this Parliament, because, with the huge changeover we saw in this chamber after the last election, I think we lowered the average age of parliamentarians by at least 15 years. If we actually did the sums, we would see that it is a younger cohort with more women and more younger men with families as well, so the demands are greater, and the Parliament is not responding. This is not just about what we want and looking after ourselves. It is about how we encourage diversity and women and people from different backgrounds to say, “I can do that and it’s workable for my circumstances.” Single parents, same-sex parents and people from all different backgrounds need to be able to say, “This is workable and I can do it. That is a place that I can see myself making a contribution to.”

I do not want to take up all my time because I know that other members feel strongly about this issue. There are so many other things that we can also do and that we need to do. I support this motion from the government and for the reasons outlined by me and previous speakers, I do not support the amendment from the Nationals WA.

**MS S.F. MCGURK (Fremantle — Minister for Women’s Interests)** [1.45 pm]: I would like to make a contribution to this debate. I thank the previous speakers, particularly those on my side who made some excellent contributions largely drawing from personal experiences. Quite obviously the vast majority of those experiences were not good ones. That is something that this Parliament really needs to take into account as we lead into next year, which will be the centenary of women being able to run for office in the Western Australian Parliament. Women have been able to stand for Parliament in Western Australia for 100 years and we are still grappling with these fundamental issues about how we make Parliament and this chamber a place that welcomes women and gives them a right to fulfil their duties as young women and, in some cases, mothers. That is fundamentally what this debate is about. It is well overdue and I am glad that we are in agreement about that.

This provision that we are now adopting is well overdue: women who are breastfeeding and are required to come into the chamber have a right to come in here. This Parliament should look like our community. It still does not. I am very proud of my party that dealt with this issue 25 years ago. In 1994, the Labor Party started debating affirmative action; the other side is still grappling with it. Where there is a will, there is a way. If you wanted to deal with it, you would deal it, and that is what you need to confront in your own party.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** We are dealing with bottle-feeding. Where are you going now?

**Ms S.F. MCGURK:** I do not need your interjection, thank you very much. I do not need your lectures about how I contribute to this debate, thank you very much.

**Mr D.C. Nalder:** How about talking about it?

**Ms S.F. MCGURK:** I am talking about making sure that this Parliament sends a message to women in our community that they are welcome—that young women in this Parliament are welcome, and that we welcome people who have family responsibilities to continue their tether to their working lives. That is what we are talking about in this debate.

Obviously, we support breastfeeding for all the reasons that have been given. It is an important public health message that for a lot of reasons we support: women who can breastfeed should be encouraged every step of the way to breastfeed and to do so, frankly, wherever they want to. I find it highly offensive the notion that people who choose to bring their children into perhaps a noisy environment are committing some sort of child abuse. It is an incredibly offensive notion and has —

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Thank you, member.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 13 March 2019]

p1100a-1117a

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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**Ms S.F. McGURK:** The point was made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that for women or anyone to bring babies into this chamber at times when it is rowdy could in fact constitute child abuse. It is an absurd proposition and insulting to women and parents.

**Mr D.C. Nalder** interjected.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Why don't you just keep quiet for once?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** This has at times been a rather touchy debate, but I think it can go on quite happily so long as we do not get a lot of interjections. I would like to hear the minister out, thank you.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** I do get angry when men from the Liberal Party start to lecture me about how I should address this particular point in the debate.

Several members interjected.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** "Boys will be boys", remember that. Do not give me any lectures —

Several members interjected.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr I.C. Blayney):** Thank you. Minister, will you refer your comments directly to me?

**Mr D.J. Kelly:** Or call him for interjecting.

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** I will call you, Minister for Fisheries. This debate has gone on quite well until now, so could all sides please keep their interjections to themselves, thank you.

**Ms S.F. McGURK:** Mr Acting Speaker, emotions do get a little heightened around this debate because women from our side have given some very practical experiences of when the other side, both Liberal and National Parties, had an opportunity in the past to act on this issue and they failed. They had an opportunity to support women who were new mothers in this place, and they failed. Our party is not perfect with all matters equal opportunity. I would not be the first to say that it is, but we are grappling with this issue, and we have done that for the last 25 years. As a result, I am very proud that we have more women on our side of the chamber and this Parliament is dealing with making this place a family-friendly environment, as much as is practical in the environment that we have. I understand that that is an important debate that most workplaces are grappling with at the moment. I spend much of my time as Minister for Women's Interests talking to corporations, leading businesspeople, organisations and employees about how that can be achieved in the workplace and, frankly, I find this Parliament a little wanting in that area. It was very eloquently put by the member for Morley. This issue needs to be seen. The issue about whether we only allow breastfeeding in this place needs to be considered in light of this Parliament dealing with women in the workplace, supporting family-friendly practices and attracting a broad range of people into this Parliament, as we should do. It is obviously the case that breastfeeding by its nature can only be done by the mother. If we want to attract women into this place, we need to ensure that we send the message that we want them in our Parliament and that young mothers who have feeding responsibilities have a right to be here and that their right to exercise their vote will not be impeded by their decision to breastfeed. That is essentially what we are talking about. That is why it galls us to—what we consider the other side to be doing—play politics with the notion of bottle-feeding as well. Obviously, bottle-feeding can be done by other people and it can be done outside the chamber. That is why we are not supporting the amendment today.

It has been an important debate, but I hope it is the beginning of a debate in which this Parliament starts to grapple with how it ensures that it is attracting a broader range of people to stand for office and spend their time as they raise young families in this chamber, or indeed, as they have various caring responsibilities through their lives. I know that is difficult. We have security issues in this Parliament and the constraints of an old building, but notwithstanding that, where there is a will there is a way. That is the message that this government is sending out to private industry. It needs to attract more women into the workplace, it needs to tap into the resource that is the women of Western Australia and it needs to accommodate modern workplaces as family-friendly to attract not only women, but also young men who, rightly, want to play more of a role in parenting their children.

**MR Z.R.F. KIRKUP (Dawesville)** [1.54 pm]: I will make a very quick contribution on the amendment that has been moved by the Leader of the Nationals WA—one that is very important. I listened with consideration to contributions made by members on both sides, and appreciate at the outset of my contribution those lived experiences that have been spoken about by, in particular, the members for West Swan and Morley. The circumstances they faced is disappointing. I was not part of any decision, or anything like that, but it is unfortunate to hear those, and I am certain there are experiences on both sides of the challenges that working mothers have faced. Time and again it is thrown at the opposition that this has been made into a political argument, that somehow the Leader of the National Party has moved an amendment that is a political one in nature. I will make members aware of page 3 of the Procedure and Privileges Committee report, which says —

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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The Committee concurs that not only should bottle-fed babies receive the same consideration as breast-fed babies, but that bottle feeding would also enable fathers who are members to engage more actively in parenting their children.

This is not a political decision, I do not believe, from members of the Nationals WA and indeed the Liberal Party in supporting it. This is simply reflecting a government-dominated committee and its recommendations to this place on standing order changes. It is a representation of that committee, which comprises more government members than it does opposition members, and, indeed, the government members on that committee suggested that bottle-feeding should also be allowed. That is all the National Party leader's amendment makes reference to, and one that all of us should support. I find it surprising that given it was a government-dominated committee that made that recommendation that the government will vote against its own recommendation. That is very disappointing to me.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** It's not a government recommendation; it's a committee recommendation.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Quite right, member for Wanneroo. It is a committee with government members in the majority.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** So you're saying every committee recommendation is a government recommendation?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Again, member for Wanneroo, I am going to continue.

**Ms S.E. Winton:** Is that what you're saying, member for Dawesville?

**The SPEAKER:** No, what I am saying is I call you to order for the first time and a second time. The first was before I stood, and the second was when I was standing.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I know the member for Wanneroo is passionate and I look forward to her contribution on this debate, shortly. I think the point still stands.

**Ms S. Winton** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Wanneroo, I call you to order for the third time.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I have been disappointed with the tenor of debate in this case. I have heard interjections, in particular the member for Kalamunda, I think it was, who said it was in the Liberal Party's DNA for us to be anti-women, and I previously heard the member for Wanneroo attack the member for Vasse for the position that she has taken on this amendment. We could do without the personal attacks in circumstances such as this, I suspect.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** It is very important for this debate to be conducted on a plane of dignity and discipline, and that is not something that we have seen when gender identity and politics are being played and members on our side are attacked for the position they put in making this amendment today.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** In 100 years, it has had 14 female members.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Southern River, you have only just come into the chamber; I call you to order for the first time. It has been a good debate until now.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I appreciate the point the member for Southern River is making. The point is that we now have an opportunity to change the course of this chamber to be more embracing of new families.

Several members interjected.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** We do. So much of the political discourse is about what happened previously, how bad that was, and the previous government. We have an opportunity here and now to draw a line and say that this is a new chapter that we want to write, and that we want to make sure that we see progress.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** The point stands. The Leader of the National Party has moved an important amendment that is reflected in the government's own committee's recommendations. It is an amazing situation that we are attacked on this side for our positions, and in particular the female members of the opposition are attacked for the positions that they have put because they have the temerity to back in recommendations that have been made by a government-dominated committee and its report on changes to the standing orders of this place. I find that very disappointing. The discourse could have been conducted much better. The contributions from many members, in particular as I said before, the members for West Swan and Morley on their lived experiences here, has imparted on me something that is very important. I understand that, and it is now important for us to draw a line under what has happened in the past, recognise that and make those changes going forward. The point stands. The Procedure and

Mr David Templeman; Ms Mia Davies; Mrs Liza Harvey; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Bill Marmion; Speaker; Dr David Honey; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Vincent Catania; Mrs Michelle Roberts; Amber-Jade Sanderson; Ms Simone McGurk; Mr Zak Kirkup

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Privileges Committee made the recommendation on page 3 that states that bottle-fed babies should be given the same consideration as breastfed babies. The Minister for Women's Interests also raised the point, which I appreciate, about young fathers and the role that they can have in participating in the family unit. I cannot speak at all of having children, that is not something that I am in yet, but we are likely in that phase of our lives.

**Mr P.A. Katsambanis** interjected.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Thank you, member for Hillarys, but we are likely in that phase of our lives when that will be a consideration of ours. It will be a consideration of ours about—hopefully, if I am blessed enough to have children—what that will look like regarding my participation in this place. By no means will it come close to the experiences of members who have spoken before; not at all. I do not make any assertions —

**Mr F.M. Logan:** He owns 500 votes!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Thank you very much. Once again —

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** No; it was 343.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** It was 343 votes, member for Cockburn; not 500. Once again, we could do without that kind of attack in consideration of important standing order changes. I make the point, I would like to end my consideration —

**Mr D.A. Templeman** interjected.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I would like to end without interjections from the other side, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I am very lucky that I am surrounded on all sides in this place by women who are strong and courageous and who fight for what they believe in. I am very, very lucky.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 1126.]