

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green


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SUBJECT: Democratic Rights

MEMBER: Mr ANDREW

Democratic Rights

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.49 pm): I rise to express my concerns at the ongoing and increasing use of the state emergency powers. They are past draconian laws more suited for a dictatorship country than a liberal democracy such as ours. Each time this House has voted to extend the emergency powers legislation, the government has used them to introduce policies to encroach further and further on the rights and the liberties of Queenslanders. Meanwhile, parliament itself is bypassed while all the powers for providing oversight and scrutiny are either diminished or taken away.

For almost two years I have sat in the House and listened to the endless rationalisations from the government on the need to reduce transparency and accountability in favour of speed and efficiency, all while—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member, there is a bill that is currently under debate relating to the extension of provisions around COVID-19. You need to ensure that you are not contributing to that particular debate and that particular bill. I would urge you to keep your comments very general and stay right away from the bill that is currently under consideration.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for your guidance. In my work on the parliamentary committee, I have sat there many times and listened to experts and bureaucratic heads give testimony and display an understanding that the people are something that must be managed somehow. As one said when speaking on a new police powers law, 'We don't want to startle the horses or anything,' the prevailing attitude being that ordinary people are incapable of making correct judgements when it comes to decision-making. They are, in other words, unworthy of participation in our own government. This attitude has now reached dangerous levels in Queensland. Not only do ordinary people not matter anymore; it seems we are being recast as some domestic terror threat.

Can there be a sign of greater betrayal than the sight of honest, hardworking Queenslanders crying out in anger as they watch their whole lives being smashed to pieces by our governments? This is shameful!

I used to think that this House shared my conviction on the superiority and strengths of our liberal democratic form of government that had enabled us, as a state, to build a strong foundation of public trust from which we are then able to overcome the crisis and period of adversity together. My real fear is that all these cruel laws and undemocratic changes have become permanent and that we will have lost our democracy. If that were to happen, the burden of responsibility for its loss would be on the shoulders of every member in this House, including myself, which is why I find it very difficult to work along with some of the matter that is being put through. I find it difficult to reconcile that the democratic process in some ways is not being adjusted in ways that we will look back and say, 'Why did we do this?'