



DAVID MORRIS MP
Member for Mornington

A New Local Government Act? – Debate shut down!

Posted on 21 June 2018

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) (16:09:05) — I too rise to oppose the adjournment of debate on this bill.

As I made clear in my opening remarks in the second-reading debate, this is a very detailed bill. The heft of the bill indicates the size of it: 409 clauses, 119 consequential amendments plus four principal acts being amended. There is an enormous amount of detail, and it is just plain ridiculous for legislation of this type to not be considered in detail.

There was a strong expectation that this bill would be considered in detail, and now, for reasons best known to itself, the government has decided that it should not go down that path.

I also want to pick up on a point made by the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change a couple of minutes ago. It appears that that minister, despite the length of her service in this house, does not understand the difference between the second-reading debate and the consideration-in-detail stage.

The second-reading debate is about the broad principles of a bill. It is not about the nitty-gritty, it is not clause by clause, it is not about specific concerns. It is about the principles of the bill.

That is the way this Parliament has operated since its inception; it is the way every Westminster parliament operates. I think it is absolutely staggering that a minister of the Crown can stand up and say, 'Well, you've had your opportunity to have more second-reading speakers and you haven't taken up that opportunity'. That is just complete nonsense.

We have addressed, I think quite effectively, the principles around this bill. I did it for 30 minutes; a number of other speakers also made contributions. But I certainly made the point, as did the other contributions from this side that I heard, that this is a very detailed and important bill and it deserves serious consideration in detail.

It is not a slim bill simply amending an existing principal act; it is a complete rewrite of the Local Government Act 1989. For this house to attempt to abrogate its responsibility to consider the bill clause by clause, to consider the bill in detail, to pass in the end the best possible bill that we can, is frankly an absolute disgrace.

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