

**Legislative Council  
Hansard  
Thursday 26 March 2026**

The President, **Mr Farrell**, took the Chair at 11 a.m., acknowledged the Traditional People and read Prayers.

**PETROLEUM REPORTING (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS)  
BILL 2026 (No. 11)**

**Second Reading**

[11.50 p.m.]

**Ms WEBB** (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise to speak on the Petroleum Reporting (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026 that we have before us today at such short notice, and as I said in the previous debate on the suspension of Standing Orders, that I do so very reluctantly. I put on the record in this record of this debate: I do not think we should be dealing with this bill under these circumstances, rushed through tonight when we have not had a chance to properly consider it. People can refer to my remarks in the Standing Orders debate to have a fuller understanding of my concerns about that. I'm particularly disappointed that we haven't had time to fully consult with people who have reached out to us as key stakeholders affected here who are quite understandably keen to really know what this bill is about and how it's going to affect them and want to potentially be able to interact with us about our decision making on the bill, about, potentially, even, I would imagine, things like amendments or whatnot - haven't had a chance to do that, even though we've had those stakeholders reach out to us directly by email. That's actually quite derelict in this place that that's been the case. I apologise to those stakeholders that we haven't been able to provide an opportunity for them to be dealt with respectfully.

Having said that, of course, we don't want to be in a situation of having to do anything. For a situation in Tasmania of fuel shortage that is going to be urgent and an emergency, of course we want to be prepared for that. We don't want to be caught short. I do think this bill really has two tranches in it, if you will. There's one that definitely didn't need to be done quickly and it would have gone through this place in a flash with no no problems whatsoever - that was the measures to do with being able to direct information to be provided and those penalties being increased for those recalcitrant companies that are being difficult about providing information at the moment, that would have flown through.

Some of the other things aren't as urgent. They're not as urgent about securing our supply could have waited either till next week or possibly even till next month when we're back for another sitting week, but the government wasn't prepared to consider splitting the bill. We could vote against clauses to give effect to that ourselves in this place; that'd be messy and scrappy. I would have questions too about if whether we've struck clauses out of the bill, can they be brought back in another bill later in this term of government or not? I don't know. There's rules about that here that we haven't actually had time to get advice on how the rules of this place would apply in that situation. So, here we are again, up against the the wall really, with this, nowhere to go when you're not given time to even get the right information and inform yourselves into your options. We do often have things available to us here to be able to be masters of our own destiny in this Chamber. But of course, it still does depend on the will of the Chamber. It's been the will of the Chamber that we deal with this tonight.

I note we have actually probably all made a mistake in referring to the fact that we all would have needed the Premier to decide to recall us in this place to deal with this another time. In fact, this place is a master of its own destiny. We could have recalled ourselves, actually. At

the time we were adjourning and setting the date next sitting, this Chamber can set its own date of next sitting. I believe the Clerk's giving me - we can, we can recall ourselves to this place by setting the date. Something for us all to remember next time. It was pointed out to me after it was all done and dusted [inaudible] debate. But quite frankly, if we'd adjourned this debate and we adjourned to the next Tuesday or whenever, we could have come back ourselves under our own steam. It's actually not the Premier's decision when we sit here; it's this Chamber's decision in terms of setting the date of the next sitting. Let's all keep that front of mind for future reference.

I'm not going to go through the bill in detail part by part, it's the government's job to do that. They've done it to some extent. Other members have spoken to parts that they were interested in. I am also concerned about the price cap capacity and unintended consequences and how that's going to be managed. I am also, as the member for Murchison mentioned in her contribution, her concerns around the inequitable impacts of these things and whether we are best supporting all those who might need to be supported. That's going to be an ongoing question, not necessarily dealt with by matters under this bill, but it's certainly for all of us to be aware of and the government.

I think the government should have to be answering regular questions about how they are managing the equity impacts of this situation if it does proceed into particularly emergency sorts of scenarios and drastic measures having to be brought in. I hope we don't, but if we do get into that space, equities are a major concern. We know that Tasmania has big divide in the community when it comes to resources and how well people are able to withstand different sorts of shocks and it generally does need more than just tweaks around the edges like half price bus fares to be able to actually materially smooth out that inequity. That's something for us all to be monitoring going forward regardless of the particular provisions of this bill.

I'm double checking my notes, Mr President, to make sure there weren't any other things I wanted to go to.

To speak briefly, and of course if we get to the committee stage as others have mentioned, and as I had foreshadowed, I do have an amendment for clause 19 of what is now clause 19 of the bill. It is on a topic that is a broad principal concern for me, a concern that's principle based. It's to do with parliamentary oversight of the executive and it's an area that was very much brought to my attention at the time we went through the COVID emergency, and we had to legislate under incredibly difficult circumstances there. After that experience it's always been for me quite a front of mind concern to always look for opportunities to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the executive or to address areas or times when that has not been dealt with as robustly as it should. No executive likes parliamentary oversight, of course, so they're unlikely, when they bring legislation through this place, to have put in things as robustly as others like myself might like.

I'll speak to my amendment in more detail when we get to that stage of things when we're in committee. Suffice to say, I've tried to approach it in a way that didn't make changes to the government's drafting of their elements of the bill. I could have approached it in that way, but I deliberately chose not to do that, but to try to come at it from slightly different angle to be able to achieve that greater certainty about oversight without disrupting the government's intentions and decisions about time periods, for example.

We will come to that more. Mr President, in the committee stage. That's all I'm going to say in terms of my contribution on the bill. Of course, there would and could be much more to say, but I don't have time to have contemplated it properly, to have researched it, to have

consulted with relevant stakeholders, to have gathered my thoughts effectively, particularly not at this stage of the day. I'm disappointed in that and it's a shame to feel that you are legislating in a way that is far less than ideal when we are tasked to be here to do this as a responsibility on behalf of our Tasmanian community.

Mr President, on that I will leave my contribution.

**PETROLEUM REPORTING (MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS)  
BILL 2026 (No. 11)**

**In Committee**

**Clause 19 -**

New amendment

**Ms WEBB** - I have an amendment to move in my name. Clause 19, page 14. After paragraph C, insert the following paragraph D by inserting the following subsection after subsection 2, 2A, if a period of emergency restriction has been declared under this section for 90 days or more within a 120-day period, a resolution of both houses of parliament is required that authorises A any extension of that period of emergency restriction under this section or B any further period of emergency restriction that is to be declared in the 120 days immediately following that 120-day period.

So, to speak to that amendment, the Petroleum Products Emergency Act section 5 that we're looking at here is about the governor and that would be on the advice from the executive, the governor declaring proclamation a period of either restriction or rationing, that's what section 5 is doing, and there are rules here about how long that can last for and when extensions are made, how long they can last for. The thing that I'm interested in about this is that through the bill we're looking at today we're extending the timeframes that are in this bill that periods of restriction and rationing can be applied or declared. We're already extending that out and one of the key things that the section in the principal act does at the moment is recognises a principle we would all be familiar with, which is that that sort of executive government decisions - I know it's the Governor declaring it, but on the advice of executive government - like that should have parliamentary oversight at some point. That's a fairly straightforward democratic principle so that executive government's power isn't untrammelled. It already has that built in. The way it is currently in the principal act is that it recognises under section 52B that basically if you've gone for a period of 28 days and you want to extend it further, then you have to come to parliament to ask for or get parliament to agree with that further extension. We've continued that because in the bill we have, we're extending the time periods but we're still retaining that.

It's just that now because we're extending the time periods, it goes out to 60 days. So, you can have a period of 60 days basically through potentially some extensions made where a declaration has been made about restrictions and rationing. Two months is a pretty long time for the Tasmanian community to be under restriction and rationing provisions of some sort. If we'd had 60 days and the government wanted by the Governor to extend it further, it would have to come to parliament and that's fine. That's good that's still there in what we're doing today. My concern was that, well, 60 days is a really long time. What if we'd had that period of time and it had come to an end and then after a very short duration we'd entered into another declaration of an emergency restriction and rationing period and that could extend out to 60 days then under what we're doing today. So, within a fairly short period of time you could end up with a two month block and then quite soon another two-month block of restriction and rationing that had never been brought to parliament - was my concern.

What I wanted to do was insert into this some sort of provision, so not too much of that could go on without parliament being able to have some oversight of the executive government decision making behind that. That's the intention of the amendment, to address some questions that I might be able to pre-empt. Why the 90 days? Why the 120 days? One of the things I would have been inclined to do had I had more time to interact with this bill, to talk with the government about it, I would have been inclined to, in the first instance, probably have looked to shorten the 60 days that the government had here in their amendments. I think that's a really long time. Two months is a really long time for a government to have the state under restrictions and rationing without coming to parliament. But rather than interfere with any of the drafting of the government here and try to mess with these 28 days and 60 days that we're changing already, rather than trying to change what the government was doing, I've come at it separately, and I think much more modestly, to at least put in something as a backstop to try to keep some strength around this principle. The 90 days and the 120 days, I certainly don't have a well researched rationality to give you for why those two particular amounts of time other than to say I felt like if we'd been under 90 days restriction and rationing within a 120 day period - so there might have been a break or two in it but total of 90 days within 120 days - the state would probably expect us as parliament, to provide some oversight of the executive government's decisions on that front, would probably want particularly key stakeholders or citizens or representative groups or whoever it might be, would expect us as a parliament to at least have the government have to explain to us as parliament why they're doing it, why they want it to go longer, and that would be a reasonable democratic principle.

That's the gist of it. I can't give you a better reason for the 90 and 120 days. I would like to, if I had more time, find a good rationale. One of the things to be avoided, as it was explained to me with this sort of amendment, was not to be seen to or have it be constraining of the Governor in the sense of her ability to make a declaration. This really sort of puts it ahead of the Governor's decision on that point. The way it's drafted, it mimics some similar drafting in the *Nature Conservation Act*, as it turns out, we looked, I said, 'Is there somewhere else we can look to to find a similar sort of approach and mimic that?' That's what we've done in the drafting process. Hopefully that's enough information about what the intention is, where I've come from in terms of the drafting under pretty tight circumstances tonight, trying to not disrupt what the government was intending to the greatest extent, stick with the principle I feel is very important in terms of parliamentary oversight of the executive decision making and have something that's relatively defensible even on a common sense basis even if I can't put something more definite to it as a rationale for those particular timeframes. I'm happy to answer questions if I can.

**Ms RATTRAY** - The government recognises and acknowledges the amendment moved by the member. I can say on behalf of the government from the outset that the government will not be opposing the amendment. In the government's view, the scenario that the member is concerned about is very unlikely to materialise and they would have considered longer periods would be put to parliament for approval under the existing section. Nonetheless, it is also recognised that the bill has been brought in on emergency, as we all know, and therefore the government has no objection to ensuring parliamentary oversight regarding a long-term period of emergency declaration and won't be.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**Title agreed to.**

**Bill reported with amendment.**