

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
HANSARD
Tuesday 23 June 2026

ADJOURNMENT

[excerpt...]

Attitude of the Government to the Legislative Council

[8.02 p.m.]

Ms WEBB (Nelson) - Mr President, I rise on Adjournment to make a short contribution. I wish to raise deep concerns regarding the increasingly disrespectful attitude of the executive towards this parliament and particularly this Chamber. I'm specifically wishing to raise as a pressing matter and draw to the attention of the government as a matter of urgency my deep concern regarding what I consider to be an inappropriate and disrespectful tone of the Premier in his correspondence on 9 June in response to a letter sent by the President on behalf of this Chamber, dated 28 May. In that May correspondence, the President makes it clear he is not only conveying serious concerns formally raised in this place by two members, but seeking responses to the questions formally placed on the *Hansard* on 27 May.

It is my understanding that this is perfectly appropriate of the President, as the presiding officer of this Chamber, to take this course of action. As stated in the Legislative Council annual reports:

The President is the representative of the Council in all matters.

It beggars belief that in response to these very serious matters raised by two parliamentary colleagues and the correspondence of the President as representative of this Chamber, the Premier of this state made a conscious choice to belittle and dismiss when he decided to state:

I'm quite disappointed in the assertion in your letter and firmly reject your claim of a lack of respect towards members and the staff of the Legislative Council.

That sentence - which, by the way, is the longest in that particular correspondence - demonstrates exactly that lack of respect for this place which has been raised with him by quite an appropriate parliamentary mechanism. He has actually condemned himself by these dismissive words. The Premier deliberately chose to gaslight this Chamber's presiding officer rather than address the substance of the issues raised. This is utterly extraordinary and shocking and is counter to anything remotely resembling leadership. As we know, each Chamber is a master of its own destiny. By that, it is acknowledged that we can determine the standards and privileges we consider acceptable within the broader parliamentary conventions and practices.

It is hard to consider the low standard, as reflected in the Premier's correspondence, as indicative of any intention to work in good faith with members of this place. This latest demonstration of such disrespect and lack of good faith is not isolated, sadly.

Continually, members in this place raised the lack of informative answers provided when

requesting information. We've seen that just today, including in Estimates committees and here in this Chamber. We also hear of independent statutory officers who also have a responsibility to report to this parliament being denied information. This lack of good faith, professional courtesy and deliberate disrespect of established operating parliamentary conventions and protocols continues to add up and continues to undermine trust and confidence in this government.

I urge the Premier to immediately demonstrate genuine good faith by providing an updated response to the President's letter which was issued on behalf of this Chamber as a matter of urgency and to provide the information and clarification requested. If the Premier, as he stated in his dismissive four lines of 9 June, does not consider providing this clarification to be the responsibility for government business, then he needs to step up and provide the requested responses, comprehensively and directly, to the Chamber either via correspondence or in a statement that the Leader could provide to us on his behalf.

It is not up to this Chamber to keep accepting this bad faith and dismissive attitudes and to keep finding ways to accommodate unacceptable behaviour. I'm deeply concerned that we are witnessing an unnecessary erosion of good and respectful parliamentary practice between the executive and this Chamber.

I urge the Premier to urgently reconsider this unacceptable piece of correspondence, revisit it and respond in good faith at the earliest opportunity.

Ms THOMAS - Hear, hear.

The Council adjourned at 8.07 p.m.