



Speech by

**BRUCE DAVIDSON**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Committee (Cognate Debate)**

**Estimates Committee A**

**Report No. 2**

**Mr DAVIDSON** (Noosa—LP) ( 2.57 p.m.): Before the State election this year, we heard much from the Minister for State Development about the new Department of State Development that the Government was going to establish in Queensland. It was going to be the "Department of Grunt". I assure the Chamber that I have yet to hear the Minister outline a vision for the role of this department.

The Minister used the Estimates committee hearings to denigrate the previous Government and to pursue his hatred of coalition members. He used every opportunity possible to try to embarrass the previous Government. As the Minister for State Development, why did he not use that opportunity to outline his vision for business and industry in Queensland?

**Mr Seeney:** He has not got one.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** That is right. He is so bereft of ideas that he is at a loss to explain to the people of Queensland what he intends to do. He lost the opportunity on day one.

In the past we heard much from the current Premier about sourcing the best people in the country who have a talent for heading departments. Often in this Chamber he has said that if one pays peanuts one will get monkeys. But what did they do when they came to Government? They hired blokes like Ross Rolfe, who does not have any corporate or commercial understanding of the business world at all, to head the Department of State Development. The Labor Party missed the opportunity to go to the free and open market and hire the best possible person in Australia to head the biggest business department in Australia. You missed the opportunity again and again and again. You got three deputy directors-general, and not one of them has any commercial——

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Reeves): Order! I remind honourable members of a previous ruling by the Speaker that members must not use the word "you". They must refer to members by their party.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. For clarity and the accuracy of the record, I state that I only have two assistant directors-general.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** And not one of them has any corporate or commercial experience. The Minister has 25 senior executive officers and not one of them comes from the private sector or has any real commercial or corporate experience. All that the Minister has done is make this department into the biggest bureaucracy of all time. For 12 months, TSBI and the KPMG consultants worked to structure a department that would reflect the department's core business. We went through pain and frustration to reduce the number of executive officers from 11 to three, to give the core business of the department a focus and to get rid of all the processes and the bureaucratic maze. The day that the Minister walked into this department, he re-established the old DBIRD system. The department has 25 executive officers, two assistant directors-general and a director-general who has no commercial or corporate experience in the business sector.

The Minister has missed the opportunity. We know that. The phones are ringing, the crows and the roosters are crowing, and the message is coming loud and clear from all of the officers in his department. They now have to endure frustration because of the structure that the Minister has put in place. The Minister missed the opportunity to source the best talent in this State to head that department. Ross Rolfe is not respected in the business community. A number of people who have spoken to me over the past three months reckon that he is a dud. And he is the head of the "grunt" department! Why did the Minister not go to the open market and source the best possible person?

I notice that the Minister opened the Bundaberg business centre. The Minister has renamed it the Office of State Development and claimed it as an initiative of his Government. We established 16 business centres up and down the State. The Minister knows that. He criticised us when he did that. He criticised us for amalgamating the QSBC into the Department of Tourism, Small Business and Industry. However, now the Minister is adopting those business centres as his own and rebadging them as Offices of State Development. He is cashing in on my initiative. The other failure of your Government is your failure to recognise small business within your portfolio. You have totally failed.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks through the Chair and will not use the word "you", in accordance with the previous ruling of the Speaker that members will refer to other members by their correct title.

**Mr DAVIDSON:** The Minister has failed to recognise small business. The Small Business Council, which had met 13 times in regional areas of Queensland—an initiative that was applauded by small business in this State—has not even heard from the Minister. He has not even had the decency to contact the Small Business Council. The Minister has not recognised small business in his portfolio. He has totally destroyed the structure of small business in his department.

Time expired.

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