



Speech by

LINDA LAVARCH

STATE MEMBER FOR KURWONGBAH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee G

Report

Mrs LAVARCH (Kurwongbah—ALP) (4.19 p.m.): We will have to get a volume control for the member for Callide. If he continues at this rate, he will have a heart attack before the next election. Perhaps the rest of us can have some earplugs.

I am pleased to be able to participate in the debate on the report of Estimates Committee G. Before I speak to the report, I will make some general comments. Firstly, I pay tribute to the Chair, the member for Lytton, who did a marvellous job. I also thank the committee staff. In particular I pay tribute to the three Ministers who had their budgets scrutinised by the committee that day—the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, the Honourable Bob Gibbs and the Honourable Rod Welford. I was most impressed with the breadth and depth of their knowledge of their departments. I felt that they only called on their departmental staff to make them feel part of the process and so that it was not a waste of time for them to attend the committee hearing. I also commend the Opposition members of the committee for their constructive and cooperative approach during the day.

The hearing ran smoothly; however, I know that a comment was made at the end of the day that we would have liked more time to scrutinise the budget of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. The time went too quickly and I know that there were a lot more questions we wanted to ask. Next year's committee may wish to take that into consideration.

Turning to specific issues, and starting with Tourism, Sport and Racing, I applaud the Minister for reintroducing the funding program for the construction or upgrade of the multipurpose sport and recreation centres throughout Queensland. This was an excellent program when it was first introduced in 1995 but, regrettably, it was chopped by the previous Government.

Mr Lucas: A disgrace.

Mrs LAVARCH: An absolute disgrace. At the time Labor went out of office, there were 87 formal submissions awaiting assessment under that program. I know that the reintroduction of this program has been warmly welcomed in my electorate. I have a large youth population that does not have so many places to go. Recreation centres are being cried out for. The cost of building or upgrading multipurpose centres is enormous and beyond the reach of most community groups and even local governments. This program will go a long way to providing these much-needed facilities.

I make special mention of one group in my electorate that is using innovative sporting programs to get young people, especially those with disabilities, job ready. John Hart and his dedicated team at the Spectrum organisation have found that young people who are involved in sports and fitness programs gain confidence in themselves, become more motivated and learn to work cooperatively with others. I do not think we can ever underestimate the benefits of being involved in sport, no matter at what level. Regrettably, this organisation's application to the previous Government for assistance with this program and for facilities was refused.

Mr Lucas: Caloundra did okay.

Mrs LAVARCH: I was going to get to that, because the detail of what occurred is very revealing and very disturbing. At the Estimates committee hearing the Minister advised us that Caloundra received \$5.5m in funding for sports facilities. Compare this with grants given to some of the Labor electorates. Everton received only \$4,467 and even the Minister's own electorate received only \$9,311. I understand that the electorate of Kurwongbah did a little better, but the amount was still only \$55,000. That is 1% of the amount spent on sporting facilities in the electorate of the member for Caloundra.

Another disturbing fact came out in relation to funding for sports and recreation programs. It was revealed that \$3.15m went to the shooting fraternity throughout Queensland. One sporting discipline was favoured over all other sporting disciplines. As the Minister pointed out, the tragedy of this \$3.15m being spent on the shooting fraternity—that is after the Port Arthur tragedy—is that——

Time expired.