



Speech by

**Mr L. SPRINGBORG**

**MEMBER FOR WARWICK**

---

Hansard 27 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL**  
**Estimates Committee A**  
**Report No. 2**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Warwick—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.30 p.m.): In briefly joining in this discussion on the report of Estimates Committee A in so far as it relates to the portfolios of the Premier, the Treasurer and the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, I would like to make a couple of points. I am concerned about the 6% equity return, or the efficiency dividend, which has been put into this Budget by the State Government. I believe it is something that has the capacity to significantly impact on infrastructure, particularly in rural and regional areas. It is a concern which has not been allayed by the Government since the 6% equity return manifested itself in the State Budget this year.

I have raised it in the context of some of the issues, some of the planning and some of the infrastructure that we have to deal with from time to time in rural areas. I know that Government members, and others, would say that everything up to 1 July next year will be taken care of; it is only a matter of what happens after that. I believe that when we come to the net increase for new Government constructions we will see some sort of indirect impact and implication for infrastructure—which I consider to be social infrastructure—in a lot of areas of the State. I say to the Government that we need to be very careful about the potential implications of something such as this.

I would like to deal briefly with two other issues covered in these portfolios. I refer firstly to the matter of native title. I continue to be concerned by the lack of progress that is being made in this State and in this nation with regard to providing people with the certainty which they require to be able to negotiate their way through the native title maze. I believe that a lot of people—particularly in the metropolitan or urban areas—do not have a great appreciation of the impact that this is having on people in rural and regional areas—particularly people who want to develop. We are talking about people who might want to develop something that is fairly insignificant, or perhaps someone who might want to undertake mineral exploration or development of a new mine or some other piece of Government infrastructure.

The Government has struck a special deal in respect of the Chevron gas pipeline in an attempt to overcome the native title issues. However, for a lot of other equivalent projects around the State there is no such special deal and there is no such ease of passage. At the moment in Australia we have a regime which is not working. The Commonwealth Government is probably trying to sort this matter out but it is somewhat limited by the fact that it does not have the numbers in the Senate. The States are responsible for the bulk of land management issues in this country. This covers some 70% of land in the State. On top of that we have some freehold land and we have a small amount of Commonwealth land. We have a situation where the State is unable to do what it needs to do.

I suppose the Government that we have at the moment was not necessarily going to do the right thing by the development industries in this State anyway. We have a situation in which the Commonwealth prescribes the regime. The States have a certain amount of flexibility. The States have to submit something and then run the gauntlet of the Senate. The Government in Queensland is probably of the same ilk as those who might control the Senate. That may not be such a great problem for the Queensland Government, but it is bad news when we are dealing with development industries in

the State. We have recently seen a fair bit of lobbying of State members in an attempt to try to sort out the situation with regard to exploration. Exploration is important to the State. A great deal of economic development is being held up as a consequence of this situation.

In regard to State development, I believe that we have a very important role to play as a result of the change of Government in Indonesia. We must ensure that we continue our trade with Indonesia. The new President of Indonesia, Mr Wahid, has made statements that he is going to concentrate more on China and Israel. That rings a few alarm bells for me because Queensland has always been a fairly major trading partner with Indonesia. Does this mean that we are going to lose opportunities for trade that we otherwise might have had? I believe that the Department of State Development has a responsibility to keep our links with Indonesia going. These trade links with Indonesia have been built up over a long period. The diplomatic problems that we have seen of late, particularly in relation to East Timor, have the capacity to negatively affect the work that we have done in the past.

Time expired.

---