



Speech by

DESLEY BOYLE

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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APPROPRIATION [PARLIAMENT] BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E

Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (5.05 p.m.): I am pleased to rise to support Estimates Committee E Report No. 1 and to draw honourable members' attention to some elements of the committee's hearings and report. It was my privilege to chair Estimates Committee E. I must pass on my thanks to Hansard in the first instance for their amazingly professional and speedy management of long and difficult hearings. Their accuracy in the circumstances, as well as the ability to broadcast the committee transcript so widely on the Internet within hours, is absolutely to be commended. I also thank and pay my compliments to the committee secretariat, headed so ably by Leanne Clare and assisted by Gillian Keir and Sandy Musch.

I pay compliments also to the other honourable members who sat with me on the committee for the professional way in which the committee's proceedings and the questioning of those who were present at the committee were conducted. I pay my compliments to the Speaker, whose portfolio was under examination, and to Mr Doyle and his staff. They were clearly well prepared and able to address all of the questions placed before them.

I draw attention to one of the topics that was discussed, that is, the security of the Parliament House precinct, honourable members and staff. In fact, during the proceedings of the committee on that day there was an incident which could have led to disruption of the committee proceedings. It was as a result of the speedy response of the staff, supported by the security and attendants as well as the Queensland police, that this incident did not develop into something much more disruptive and even ugly.

A couple had attended the precinct in the morning and were wishing to participate in the committee's proceedings, despite being told that this was not possible for the public. They left and caused some difficulty at another Government office, to which the police were called, and then came back to Parliament House threatening to cause some difficulty here.

As Chair, I was aware of the arrangements that were made to deal with this matter and to keep it under control, and we had a plan B in case a real emergency developed. That did not in fact happen, and that is because the staff were so competent in this regard. Therefore, I now know that they are well able to conduct their duty. I have seen for myself an example of this. It may be that lots of honourable members do not know how good the staff are with regard to security because in fact they are effective and do protect us from incidents that may otherwise become disruptive or even threatening.

There is another matter that I would like to address relevant to the Speaker's portfolio and the Legislative Assembly. I give my support to the Speaker's future plans for a roll-out of information technology capacity, not only for our electorate offices but also for members here at Parliament House. Coming as I do from the private sector, I am amazed at how far behind our private sector management equivalents we are in terms of the access we have to information technology, to computers and to the Internet. That access would be available for a manager of any sizeable private company looking after the kinds of responsibilities and businesses that we all do as members of Parliament. They would have laptops and modems at their disposal at all of their work sites.

I concur not only with the importance of this but also with the difficulty of funding it at a time when we have so many calls, quite rightly, from our constituents for increased funding for health and

education services, for new facilities for youth and for future programs to have our unemployed more skilled, more trained and into work. So the priority that we might want to give to information technology is not possible, but my compliments indeed go to Mr Speaker and to the Speaker's Technology Advisory Group, which is monitoring this program right across Parliament.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of the parliamentary staff. As a country member, this is, in an amazing kind of way, my home away from home. I am so well looked after that I am being spoilt. Anything that can be done to make me more comfortable—in my bedroom area, in terms of the food and the services, the assistance from all of the divisions of this Legislative Assembly—is as fulsome as it possibly could be. My compliments to you, Mr Speaker, and to your staff.
