



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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APPROPRIATION BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (3.01 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on Estimates Committee G. Before speaking to the items discussed during the committee, I want to mention an issue involving liquor licensing and the local government environment. The Valley Music Council has been concerned for some time about threats to the entertainment industry in Queensland. This has come about as a result of problems regarding noise complaints from a minority of residents who have recently moved to be close to entertainment venues. The Valley Music Council is concerned about the administrative procedures and laws under the Liquor Licensing Act and Nuisance Regulations and their impact on entertainment venues. The council believes that, if entertainment has to be curtailed, it will have a major impact on tourism, hospitality and the entertainment industry in Queensland. As this industry is the second largest in Queensland, it is concerned about the flow-on impacts.

I wish to table a non-conforming petition of 16,000 signatures and an online disk of 1,000 signatures on behalf of the Valley Music Council which asks that the central Valley district be rezoned into a designated entertainment zone. It calls upon Parliament to review all legislation that affects the music and arts industry in Queensland. It calls on the Parliament to legislate for first occupancy rights for venues and communities in the event of noise complaints. The council is of the view that the laws which affect the industry at both a State and local level should be reviewed to consider the impediments which inhibit and threaten the vibrant music industry.

I know that the Minister for Tourism and Racing has an understanding of this issue, as I made representations to her on behalf of the Valley Music Council. The Minister has written to the Local Government Association in regard to this complex problem. It is all about balance—balancing the rights of residents with the rights of long-term entertainment providers to create a precinct that has become a tourist drawcard in its own right. I am a strong supporter of the Valley and what it has to offer in the form of an entertainment hub. My friends and I often attend venues in the Valley for an entertaining night out. I believe it is a bit rich for some people who choose to live in the Valley and inner city because they want to be close to the action to all of a sudden complain about noise. I think it is unreasonable for a vibrant industry to come to a halt because of a selfish few. I will say, however, that it is the responsibility of developers when planning buildings to ensure that effective noise measures are in place. Ultimately, local councils should be responsible for ensuring that this occurs when approvals are granted.

I take this opportunity to thank Ministers and their respective departments for their contribution, my fellow committee members and all the parliamentary staff who made sure that the process ran smoothly. I do, however, want to spend a couple of moments discussing the actual benefits of the whole Estimates process. I have some concerns regarding the cost involved both in the actual conduct of the hearings and the preparation done by the departments. This concern has increased due to the lack of work done by the Opposition. I think Minister Mackenroth will agree with me that for two years in a row the most probing questions he was asked in Estimates were from this side of the Chamber. That proves the lack of work done by the Opposition.

I ask the Chamber to consider the fact that we supposedly have a process which examines the expenditure of the departments with a view to ensuring that spending was appropriate and effective.

The truth hurts sometimes, yet I believe that the actual process is not questioned. I would hate to work out the real cost of this whole process, including departmental and parliamentary costs. While it is vital to ensure that Governments are kept accountable, I firmly believe that this process as used by the Opposition at present does nothing to ensure that this is the case. However, it does ensure that money which could be spent on vital services across a range of departments is taken up by the Estimates process. I believe it is the responsibility of us all to come up with a more efficient and cost-effective process. It is the responsibility of the Opposition to make it work.

In closing, I want to refer to a couple of matters affecting my electorate that relate to this budget. The Minister for Fair Trading and I are in strong support of an application by the Brisbane City Council on behalf of Queensland Netball for an expansion of the State Netball Centre, which will involve a youth centre. That funding application comes under "national facilities" in the Department of Sport. I encourage the Sports Minister to take a close look at that proposal. Hopefully, it will gain support.

I once again thank the Ministers and my fellow committee members. It was a long, tedious process, but it worked effectively due to the great parliamentary service staff. I hope that, in future years, the Opposition sees the Estimates process as a more valuable tool instead of wasting time on trivial issues, as the member for Warrego did. However, I am sure he will waste the next five minutes talking about the same issue, which again proves the uselessness of the process with this Opposition.
