



Speech by

Mr T. MALONE

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (5.32 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the report of Estimates Committee C in relation to Public Works and Housing. In doing so, I commend those involved, particularly the minister in charge of the area for which I am the shadow minister—Public Works and Housing. I acknowledge the forthright and courteous way in which he answered questions. I appreciated that, because sometimes estimates hearings are adversarial. Members of the shadow cabinet appreciate it when questions are answered in a reasonable manner.

I raised a number of issues with the minister and I will go through them one by one. In the area of public works, the Woorabinda Community Council indicated that it has dispensed with the services of Q-Build simply because of the expense involved in using Q-Build to build and maintain its facilities. The minister indicated that he would brief me in respect of that matter and take the question on notice. The reason behind that was that Project Services in particular, I believe, cost the community \$400,000 in terms of consultative work for a \$1.2 million project.

When I asked the minister about the pedestrian bridge he was very careful to keep away from that, indicating that if the department were in charge of building that bridge it would have made sure that it was progressed in a better manner. He indicated quite clearly that the department is not a construction authority for bridges.

In relation to Lang Park, the minister gave assurances to the committee that his belief would be that the redevelopment of Lang Park would come in under budget and on time. That is good news even for those who are not particularly interested in Brisbane's Lang Park stadium.

In relation to backflow prevention devices, which have been of concern to this parliament over quite a period, it is of concern that only 475 of 1,192 high-risk sites have had backflow prevention devices implemented. The remaining 717 high-risk sites will be assessed over the next two years. To me personally that is of concern. Obviously, we have to take that on board and see where we go with it.

In relation to asbestos removal from government buildings, obviously some of which will be school buildings, to date only 486 of the 1,880 buildings containing asbestos materials have had asbestos removed. There are high-risk sites in terms of asbestos. Those who understand the asbestos problem know that the loose grain material in lagging and other aspects that are basically close to where humans work and play can be of danger, especially where asbestos is part of the roof complex. Often that is quite secure and the only problem with it is usually when the asbestos is being removed. I understand that it will take some time and will be a huge cost. There is still a lot of work to do in that area.

I turn now to Poinsettia Press, which was a Brisbane City Council operation that was taken over by the department in the deal of a lifetime in that it needed to employ only four permanent staff out of a staffing level of about 20 to have it passed across to it at no cost. I was very impressed that the department was able to take on board that operation at a very low cost. It was certainly the deal of the century.

In relation to termite control operators, who come under the control of the QBSA, this is of concern to all of us. I was heartened to hear that some work is being done in that area. We need to

keep on top of that. There is a huge latent problem out there. If it is not kept under control we will have to face some huge issues.

There were some problems with the Cairns Convention Centre. Interestingly, the construction engineers, Ove Arup, are also the engineers in charge of the footbridge. Perhaps there is a connotation there.

In relation to housing, there are issues involving the placement of people in crisis accommodation. I believe the minister answered very substantially in respect of that matter.

Time expired.
