



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 1 August 2002

APPROPRIATION BILLS [ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E]

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! The question is—
That the report of Estimates Committee E be adopted.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (11.43 a.m.): It is with pride that I rise to speak as the committee chairman of Estimates Committee E. Our committee scrutinised the 2002-03 state budgets for the departments of Natural Resources and Mines, the Environment, and Local Government and Planning. I sincerely thank the relevant ministers, their departments and departmental staff for what I believe were clear, succinct and detailed responses where practicable. My gratitude also goes to the members for Warrego, Callide, Noosa, Gaven and Pumicestone. The member for Maryborough tabled his apologies for his absence from the majority of the process due to illness.

Rachelle Stacey, our research director, Carolyn Heffernan, our executive assistant, and other relevant parliamentary staff did an exemplary job for which I am very thankful. They supplied us with information which included organisational charts that provided details of the structure of the various departments, a list of names of the senior departmental officers and a list of the statutory authorities and government-owned corporations administered by the various ministers. I believe it is far better to speak with a person than to or at a person.

I admit that prior to the committee meeting there were some sleepless nights on my behalf because I realised that sometime bad boys Mr Seeneey and Mr Hobbs were on my committee. I must commend their attitude through the process. The member for Callide did ask numerous intelligent and probing questions that I acknowledge show his utilisation of the Estimates process. The member for Warrego could be a little more courteous and respectful when addressing a lady, and I obviously am disappointed in his need for a dissenting report but acknowledge that that is politics. I also acknowledge the member for Keppel and his valuable import as a non-committee member attendee obviously in his position as shadow spokesperson for the environment.

The decision to structure the order of questions for the hearings for the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Mines was inconsequential as non-government members seemed not to utilise the full time anyway to scrutinise the government-owned corporation SunWater. *Hansard* will clearly outline this fact.

Issues of specific interest to me and indeed my electorate that were addressed in the process included the quality of the water in the Mooloolah River which at certain times has been poor due to effluent overflow occurrence, et cetera. We clearly realise now that the Environmental Protection Agency and the Caloundra City Council have been working in partnership on the development of the SEQ regional and the Mooloolah River catchment water quality management strategies and have been proactive in addressing issues impacting on water quality. Under the 2001 SEQ water quality ecosystem health report, the rating for the Mooloolah River was a B minus. I would like to see that rating rise by ensuring that sewage outfall is not allowed to be pumped into the river, and I thank the minister for working with me to achieve this.

The EPA and the council are working in collaboration with industry and community stakeholders to address the issues associated with achieving sustainable catchments and waterways for both the fresh water and marine reaches of the Mooloolah River. The recent and possible future additions to the Mooloolah River National Park add to the area of catchment reserved from urban and industrial development and contributes to the maintenance of the water quality. Again, realising that this is my electorate, I am very grateful. I also was very interested in the Queensland water recycling strategy, realising that Caloundra City Council has a commitment to reusing 50 per cent of the city's effluent water by 2003 and 100 per cent by 2005. The report was to be presented to council on 11 July. I am not sure that it has come up and we do realise that recycled water will never be used for potable uses.

In local government, questions were asked about where we are going with the IPA and how our state government is helping councils with their IPA planning schemes. Questions were also asked about Lyngbya outbreaks in Moreton Bay. While I was in council I was a member of SECROC, which I believe Jim Soorley chairs, and was very proactive with all the councils of south-east Queensland in attempting to address Lyngbya and other outbreaks. The Minister for Environment addressed various issues relating to tourism on the Sunshine Coast, realising that they go hand in hand, and the feasibility of promoting cycling through state forests.

Time expired.