



Speech by

Liz Cunningham

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL (ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A)

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (2.55 pm): I rise to speak on the Estimates Committee A No. 2 report. I would like to comment on a water issue that the Premier raised in his contribution, and I asked a question on this matter this morning. Several years ago in Gladstone we were in a similar position to what Brisbane is facing now. I think it was 2003; it was pre Cyclone Benny. We were on level 3 restrictions, which differed slightly to the Brisbane restrictions in that we could not fill a bucket with a hose and water the garden. If we managed to squirrel away any water from the shower or washing machine, we could use it on our gardens. Industry was on a 25 per cent cut and facing a 50 per cent cut, but we did not get the benefits of rebates and assistance for tanks. That has engendered some angst in my community because we did not get the help when we needed it.

Some things were done, including the pipeline extension to Stag Creek and some recycling with the Gladstone city sewerage treatment water back to QAL. That was an excellent and very positive move that should have been done earlier, but there was no assistance to the community to offset the drought conditions. The rebates for the south-east corner have been brought into sharp focus in my community. The people in my electorate do not begrudge those rebates; they would just like to be part of that rebate process.

The portfolio of the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for State Development, Trade and Innovation is one that has a great deal of implications for the electorate of Gladstone, with its large industry base and its large development base. I certainly commend the minister. I know she was held in high regard in the Education portfolio, and when she moved across to State Development I believe her credentials went with her. I commend the minister for the development and the planning that has occurred, particularly in rail transportation and port development. Even though it is under a different portfolio, it certainly comes under the State Development banner in terms of major projects and it is important for the state's development into the future.

I would be interested in the water allocation from the Fitzroy River for the augmentation of water supply for industry in our area, and that would come under the Coordinator-General's purview as well. Certainly, the minister's interest in industrial development and economic policy is important for the region.

The Housing portfolio remains of great concern to my electorate. We are in the process of completing singles accommodation; it is expected to be completed in November. Affordable housing continues to be a problem in all of Queensland but in my electorate particularly. The industries bring people in and there is construction money around, and this often drives the fixed-income and low-income consumers out of the market. So a continued program of affordable, public housing in the region is critically important.

I acknowledge that the minister has allocated funds for aged-care units at Tannum and some other housing units in the area, but there is certainly a continuing demand for more units at the Heritage Village

for affordable seniors accommodation. The current rent rises there have caused a lot of angst amongst the tenants, and I have written to the minister in relation to that.

Something that is not in my electorate but something which I believe must be commended is the investment in the refurbishment of the heritage listed Old Museum Building at Bowen Hills. That is a beautiful piece of architecture for its period, and it was something that for a period of time appeared to be declining in its condition and was disused. It looked dreadful. It is a beautiful building. It has been part of the arts and culture of the major Brisbane area for a lot of years. The investment in that building, as with the investment in this parliament in terms of its refurbishment and upkeep, will be an investment for our future generations.

With regard to the racetrack in Gladstone, I acknowledge the minister's earlier comments but the relocation remains a high priority. I commend the new chairman of the new committee, Dusty Lindeman. I know that he is working tirelessly to improve the financial situation of the turf club. I look forward to the opportunity, with the government and with the Queensland Racing Board, to see that relocation occur.