



Speech by

Mark McArdle

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Hansard Thursday, 10 August 2006

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

Mr McARDLE (Caloundra—Lib) (4.01 pm): I would like to start by congratulating all members of the committee, the research director and staff for the work that they put into making the examination a successful day. In particular I thank the chairman, Mr Choi MP, member for Capalaba, for the work that he did. At times a committee of this nature can be unwieldy and difficult to control. He did a wonderful job and I believe that he should be congratulated.

As the member for Warrego and the member for Capalaba by his proxy did indicate, there were some concerns in relation to answers being returned to me late on 18 July. My only concern was that the Attorney, when she addressed that issue, implied quite clearly that it was only from non-government members that questions were received late. In fact, the Attorney made this comment—

Mr Chairman, can I advise the committee that the questions from non-government members of the committee—the member for Caloundra—were due to be tabled by 10 am on Monday, 10 July. These were not received until 4.49 pm on Monday, 10 July.

I have three issues with that statement. Firstly, it does indicate that I failed to comply with Estimates Committee F's direction that questions on notice be received by the research director by 10 am on Monday, 10 July. Secondly, there is the clear implication that the government members' questions on notice were received in accordance with the direction of the committee and, thirdly, that the non-government members' questions were not forwarded to the research director until 4.49 pm on Monday, 10 July 2006. It is, in fact, not correct that I failed to comply with the direction of the committee. In fact, it has been clarified that at 7.36 am on 10 July 2006 the non-government questions were forwarded to the research director. It was, in fact, the government questions that were late, not being received until 12.18 on 10 July 2006, and it was the research director who forwarded the documentation to the Attorney's office at 4.49 pm on 10 July 2006.

I simply ask the Attorney to correct the record and acknowledge that the statement that questions from non-government members of the committee, including me, were due to be tabled by 10 am on Monday, 10 July and not received by 4.49 pm on Monday, 10 July is, in fact, not correct. In my opinion, she has an opportunity here today to correct the record. The error contained in her statement needs to be corrected in *Hansard*.

I will quickly turn to the issue of the capital acquisition statement. I have been amazed that in the last three financial years there have been major shortfalls in the stated outlay and actual outlay. In 2005-06 that shortfall was \$2.673 million; in 2004-05, \$2.658 million; and in 2003-04, \$14.775 million. Clearly this raises a real question, that is, is the government meeting the ongoing needs of a growing judicial system brought about by the population increase in this state? I note that there is a catch-up budget on the capital acquisition side of the ledger of \$74.091 million in 2006-07. It will be intriguing to see whether that figure is actually met.

One of the issues that I have is with the integrated justice information strategy. Since 2003-04 it has not met budget on one occasion. Shortfalls for 2004-05 of \$4.8 million and 2005-06 of \$3.5 million are

examples of this. This strategy is to integrate the various components of the justice system and provide a quicker and more effective method of delivering justice throughout the state. This has simply not been the case and this year—2006-07—we have \$17.1 million to be spent in an endeavour to catch up on that shortfall.

I recently had an opportunity to view the Supreme and District courts complex here in George Street. I have to say that that complex is an absolute abysmal disgrace. I congratulate the government on its recognition of the need to move forward to construct a major new courts complex in Brisbane. That building is 20 and 30 years old respectively, and if anything does need changing in this state it is certainly the major institution which houses our major courts. I join with the Attorney in the hope that 2011 will be the year that the new complex will be opened. When one goes through that complex one soon finds that not only is it antiquated but also it poses, I suspect, significant and dangerous health risks given the fact that it is poorly air-conditioned and badly lit.