



Speech by

Evan Moorhead

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 8 August 2007

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G (REPORT NO. 1)

Mr MOORHEAD (Waterford—ALP) (9.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of Estimates Committee G Report No. 1 dealing with appropriations for the Legislative Assembly. The budget allocated \$65.23 million to the running of the Legislative Assembly in the financial year 2007-08. I think all members of this House appreciate the excellent and friendly support we receive from members of the Parliamentary Service. Every one of those staff members works hard to allow us to do the job that we do for those who elect us. The budget estimates process outlined just what a great job was done in the 2006-07 financial year and also some exciting initiatives for the 2007-08 financial year.

I thank the Speaker, the Clerk and the staff of the Parliamentary Service for their participation in the hearings and the information they provided to the committee which greatly assisted us in our deliberations. As I mentioned in my speech on report No. 2, I also thank the staff who made our committee's deliberations possible, as well as the Hansard staff for their enduring efforts on the day.

During questioning, a number of initiatives worthy of support were raised. As provided in our report No. 1, the bill budgets for the establishment of a Community Engagement Unit to coordinate community engagement, education and communications activities as well as develop new initiatives to support the parliament and its members to engage with the community.

The committee also heard that the 2007-08 financial year would see the full implementation of the live video broadcast of parliament. This will mean that Queenslanders everywhere can log on and watch our proceedings. This year also saw the first video broadcast of estimates, making this scrutiny process, which is an important part of our parliamentary democracy, even more transparent and accessible. I was delighted to see that Mr Speaker is taking these proactive steps to build links between the parliament and our community. Our parliament is the linchpin of our democracy. It is important that our parliament be given the resources to engage with the broader community who vote for us and send us here.

Members will also be pleased to know that this year's budget makes provision for the development of a tabled papers database. This will provide a central access point for tabled papers which is available not only for members but for the broader community as well through the internet.

The hearing also heard that new stocktake and security procedures have been independently reviewed and found to be working well, with the 2006-07 stocktake resulting in the net addition of 180 items at a value of \$572—a variance of less than one per cent. So for those members concerned, there has not been an exodus of cake forks from the dining room under the watch of Mr Speaker.

The estimates committee also heard that the parliament is doing its part in reducing the use of water. A rainwater harvesting program has seen the air-conditioning units of the parliament using rainwater caught on site. This meant that for some weeks in June this year no potable water was used to run the air conditioning. South-east Queensland residents should be congratulated on their reduction in water use; it is great to see that our parliament is doing its bit as well.

The committee recommends that the expenditure in the report be agreed to. I commend the committee's recommendation to the House.