



Speech by

## John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 8 August 2007

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

**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (10.43 pm): It is my pleasure to rise to speak to the report of Estimates Committee G about the Legislative Assembly. I was not a member of the committee, but the parliament is certainly a passion of mine. I am proud of this place. Like the member for Gregory, I consider myself to be very fortunate to be one of the 89 Queenslanders who are members here.

I commend the Speaker. I have served under three Speakers and, of course, as I learn the longer that I am here, there are contrasts in the styles of individual people. The former member for Redcliffe spoke to me about the fact that he wanted to make it a people's House. The member for Mount Isa was more a model of what we call fiscal rectitude. That was probably because he was Speaker in more charged political times. While I had differences with the member for Mount Isa, we certainly came to an understanding of the fact that I was not interested in political point scoring but the institution.

With the current Speaker, no matter what I have written to him about—and some of those matters are quite inconsequential—he always gives those matters due consideration. He always writes back to me. Whilst he may not give me everything that I have asked for, he certainly gives consideration to my points.

As other members have mentioned, I commend the parliamentary staff who, under the Clerk, give advice to all of us. That is greatly appreciated. I have one of the longest serving electorate officers, Josie Stinson. Cathy Ermer and Jasmine Griffiths are my other assistant electorate officers. They are wonderful staff who really appreciate the staff training and support that they get from the Parliamentary Service. I thank the Parliamentary Service for that. That is a very important part of morale for my assistant electorate officer who is not part of the day to day goings-on. As members we come back from parliament and we have had so many meetings and committee hearings going on that sometimes we expect that our staff know exactly what we know is going on. It is important for them to feel part of the process. With the staff training and support that they are getting, they certainly get a chance to experience some of the things that we do. They can relate more to the things that we talk about when we get back to our electorate offices.

As the member for Southern Downs said, a balance does need to be struck in relation to the concerns of people who look at what we do and say that we are wasting money and spending too much money. Certainly, \$65 million is a significant amount in the upcoming budget. Obviously the Auditor-General's report about departmental output performance measures should apply to the parliament as well. I think it is very important that we acknowledge the special circumstances that we operate under here. We all do ourselves a disservice for the sake of scoring cheap political points if we highlight aspects about money, costs or things like that. All members would do well to consider that point.

I commend the Speaker for the establishment of the Community Engagement Unit that is aimed at youth, Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and regional Queenslanders. I understand that it will host seminars, workshops, conferences and youth parliaments for students, teachers and the general public. It is a great initiative that will hopefully spark a greater interest in the political process.

I realise that people are not reading the papers as I have all my life. More prominent politicians are getting involved in MySpace and FaceBook, and I have recently done the same thing. It is good to hear young people sharing their views about things, even if they do not want to be my online friends. Hopefully these education initiatives will get people involved. The great Liberal thinker John Stuart Mill defined democracy as a marketplace of ideas. The more ideas we have, the better we are able to cater to the four million Queenslanders we represent.

I look forward to the refurbishment of the gym facilities, which I understand the Speaker foreshadowed this morning, as well as the kitchen. I know that will help the staff.

I used to be a member of Tatts, which I left when it refused to let women in. I used to go there and apologise for the food. I have come here and, unfortunately, at times I have to apologise for the service. My guests do not make comment, but I am embarrassed because sometimes the casual staff—who are earnest and enthusiastic—do not speak the language. It is not about Mary who is wonderful in the Stranger's Dining Room. Obviously she has to work with these keen and enthusiastic people, as well as all the other staff. However, some of our foreign student visitors who are staff members really struggle with it. It can be a bit embarrassing.

I commend the Speaker for water, energy and conservation measures. Once again, it is my pleasure to make a contribution this evening.