



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 5 August 2009

APPROPRIATION BILLS: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (12.13 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and speak to the report of Estimates Committee A and acknowledge the contribution of the chairman, the honourable member for Yeerongpilly, who has just finished speaking. I was the deputy chair of the committee. It was conducted in good order. There was good natured debate throughout the day. I thank the secretariat—Rob Hansen, Alistair MacLennan and Carolyn Heffernan—and all the parliamentary staff who had to sit in the Legislative Council chamber which we know gets a bit chilly when there are not many people in it.

It was an interesting day. It is always a pleasure to speak about matters involving the parliament itself. As members know, I have a keen interest in the formalities of parliament. I want to acknowledge your contribution, Mr Speaker, in continuing the work of previous speakers in opening the parliament up to the broader public. That was something that was begun by speakers some years ago. When students are going through to QUT, as I did in years past when I was at the University of Queensland and went to band concerts which were called joint efforts at the then QIT and would look in and wonder in a half fascinated way what was going on, they know this building is open to them. Now we open the parliament to the public. I think it is wonderful that we do. The community engagement that you are doing, Mr Speaker, we should continue.

The budget appropriation for 2009-10 is \$68.642 million. I notice that we had over 50,000 function patrons, 17,000 school students, 8,000 general tour patrons and 3,000 parliamentary education program attendees. I know the tea and talks are very popular with members of the public. People will say to me that they have been here for a high tea. The mystique of the place is sometimes lost on those of us who are here regularly but certainly not on those who come in here infrequently. They think it is a great place. Of course it is the home of democracy in our great state and we should be welcoming more people.

We spoke about security measures and Mr Speaker reassured members about security measures. He has undertaken to report on the status of those within six months. I did express some concerns about whether the security working group had done its work in an appropriate time frame. It has been a couple of years since some security measures were raised via electorate officers in Cook and another office. I raised my concerns about security buzzers which have been allocated to my office and others. I appreciate that you referred to the Speaker's Advisory Committee that members can be on. I was on Speaker Reynolds' advisory committee. It only met a couple of times. The important thing is that it is there. Mr Speaker has committed to doing it. I know that your sense is that we all want to make this a better place for all who visit and all who work here.

I note that there were 145 confiscations. That has received some media interest over the last few years. The honourable member for Yeerongpilly mentioned this. I found it interesting in terms of committee funding that 20 per cent of total funds should be quarantined for travel matters. That is prudent planning and something that we would obviously like to see through all aspects of governance. We need to make

sure that we do not spend more than we earn. That is prudent given the current financial situation we find ourselves in.

I was pleased to ask questions and get answers from you about the artwork here. This is a common query from members. Members come and ask for artworks that they think may be displayed here. Mr Speaker has made a commitment to have that considered by the advisory committee and to have some Art Gallery people here to see whether we may be able to either improve our collection or borrow some of theirs. I think that would enhance the experience of members in their offices and people visiting. I am not quite sure of all the details. If I am misleading the parliament I clearly withdraw.

The other issue is bringing the place up to speed. I often say to people when I am describing the parliament that when you stay in the Annexe it is like being in the biological sciences library at the University of Queensland on Christmas Day. When there is no-one else here it is a pretty lonely, funny, musky, dank place and anything we can do to improve it would be appreciated. With that I commend the report to the House.