



Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 5 August 2010

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL:
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D**

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (11.40 am): I rise to speak in support of the report of Estimates Committee D and once again express how honoured I was to chair my second estimates committee. Estimates Committee D was appointed to examine and report on the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon. Craig Wallace, and the Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs. I thank both ministers Wallace and Palaszczuk for a job well done in answering all of the questions put to them and for working hard throughout the day-long hearing for both portfolios. Equally, I want to thank and congratulate the departmental staff and advisers who ably supported both ministers and ensured that all information was presented at the hearing in a professional and informative manner.

In addition, I wish to sincerely thank our support secretariat for all of their assistance, hard work and professionalism—namely, research director Ms Amanda Honeyman and executive assistant Ms Gail Easton, who both ensured that our committee was well supported and ran smoothly. Honourable members would never have known that this was Ms Honeyman's first estimates hearings as she did a great job, and I am sure all of my fellow committee members would agree with me.

In speaking about the other members of the committee, I also thank the deputy chair and member for Maroochydore, Fiona Simpson; the member for Hinchinbrook, Andrew Cripps; the member for Beaudesert, Aidan McLindon; the member for Pine Rivers, Carolyn Male; the member for Morayfield, Mark Ryan; the member for Murrumba, the Hon. Dean Wells; and for the committee meeting on 27 July, the member for Springwood, Barbara Stone. I believe all members worked constructively together to ensure that the estimates process was taken seriously. All of the matters that were raised were well catered for, and I believe the conduct of the members during the process actually made my job as chair quite enjoyable and streamlined.

The Main Roads portfolio component of the hearing addressed many of the government projects in this important portfolio. Across Queensland, from the north to the south-east, the Main Roads budget is building the roads and bridges for the future. Millions of dollars are being spent on maintenance and new roads and bridges, such as the Ted Smout bridge and the Sir Leo Hielscher Bridge. The \$3.3 billion roads budget is all about building a better, brighter future for Queenslanders no matter where they live. These projects are providing thousands of jobs. For example, the Gateway project alone created up to 6,000 jobs for workers at a time when we all know that jobs and job security are more important than ever before. In fact, in total around 30,000 workers will be employed in road construction this year to deliver safer and more secure roads right across Queensland.

In addition to building the roads for the future, I also welcome the \$66 million set aside for the Safer Roads Sooner project, which is all about making our road network safer and more secure for motorists. This is definitely money well spent in this very important area of safety on our roads.

In relation to the disability and community care services area, this year's budget will deliver a record \$1.61 billion to improve and expand disability and community care services across Queensland. This is a 15.2 per cent increase on last year's budget to deliver essential services to the most vulnerable members of our community and to their parents and carers. It was great to hear more about the government's 10-year Disability Services plan and the potential impact of a national disability insurance scheme. As we all know, early intervention services to support children and young people with a disability are extremely important in this area, and any programs which deliver this early intervention will deliver greater outcomes for those involved.

In the important area of multicultural affairs, the government is developing a new multicultural policy for Queensland. We learnt that, as at the hearing date, 31 public forums had been held across the state to hear views and gain important input about multiculturalism.

I also now refer to the statement of reservations, and I want to place on the record that I did not agree with the comments. In fact, I found them quite petty. I found them lacking in any substance and really just politically motivated. In the estimates D hearings, we had around 112 questions—55 non-government and 57 government—plus an additional 20 questions on notice, that is 10 each. I am convinced that, no matter how much time and no matter how many questions, the other side of this House will never be happy. I think their comments were politically motivated. For example, the member for Beaudesert was trying to paint the Independents as the fair and transparent part of this House. I commend the report of Estimates Committee D to the House.