




Speech by

Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: LEGAL AFFAIRS, POLICE, CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES COMMITTEE

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (4.38 pm): Today I respond to report No. 1, for estimates 2011, of the Legal Affairs, Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services Committee. In doing so, I would like to direct honourable members to my statement of reservation that is contained in the committee's report. Like Disney's *Aladdin* musical and the song that Aladdin sang to Jasmine on the magic carpet ride, this new committee process was indeed 'a whole new world, a new fantastic point of view, no-one to tell us no, or where to go, or say we're only dreaming'. Although on occasion, I note, the honourable member for Murrumba did call me to order and say no.

Like any good Disney flick, you need a villain. For the good guys it is always best to steer clear of the villain, and the LNP did that. We absolutely steered clear of the villain. So is it any wonder that, due to the efforts of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise and me, our committee holds the record for the highest percentage, I believe, of questions asked to departmental representatives and not the Deputy Premier. I believe if we can learn anything from this estimates process it is that, to get straight answers without the political spin or thuggery typically reserved for question time, we are best served in this place by asking the director-general rather than the Labor Party minister. This is quite concerning.

In this committee we received the confirmation surrounding the issues of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry and the debt pool blow-out. I note that in his response to questioning at the time the Attorney-General said that it was not a blow-out and he proceeded to tell us that a record \$115 million had been recovered. We need not remind the Deputy Premier that, with a record blow-out of \$680 million in outstanding fines, you would expect to see a higher collection rate.

The issue is that the government has all but given up on recovering this outstanding SPER money. This is a symptom of a government that is more interested in appearing to enact legislative reform and fiscal accountability than actually putting that into practice. Despite spending \$1 million in attempting to recover the fine defaulters, for every \$1 recovered \$2 is added to the debt pool and the government is out of ideas on how to reduce that debt pool.

Labor's new electoral laws, which suit its political interest, come at a time when Peel Street is out of money and Labor Holdings has gone bust. It was revealed that the new taxpayer funded political campaigns have blown out to over \$30 million. This includes additional staffing requirements at the Electoral Commission to deal with this new legislation. I am not convinced that the Electoral Commission has the capacity to conduct and facilitate both the state election and the local government election in the same month or within two or three months as the case may be in 2012. So my message to every Queenslander is this: as you wait in the shopping centre queue wondering whether your EFTPOS card is going to work and whether you have enough money to buy the groceries for your family, remember that it was the Labor Party Deputy Premier who signed off on your hard earned taxes being put in to bankroll the Labor Party. Some \$30 million of taxpayer money is now going to political parties.

There are serious issues that remain unanswered about the movements of senior staff in the Crime and Misconduct Commission. This is a body that is responsible for upholding integrity and fighting corruption, yet the termination of senior staff and the withholding of a reasonable explanation by the chairman are of serious concern. As I stated during the estimates hearing, I am perplexed as to how senior members of the CMC were terminated and then employed by other government agencies across Australia in high roles without any explanation about their terminations. The financial cost of these terminations is considerable.

The estimates hearing also revealed that Legal Aid was taking mortgages over people's homes in exchange for grants of aid but not telling these people how much the mortgage was for. I note the comments from the chairman of Legal Aid at the time of the questioning that the idea I put to them was in fact a good idea and that he was actually going to look at implementing it. I do hope the government implements our idea of telling people how much their mortgages are when they get Legal Aid.

The Office of the Adult Guardian has also been unnecessarily overspending on temporary appointments of senior guardians by regional managers. Given the work that is undertaken by the office, it is vital that the practice of employment continuity is encouraged, particularly when dealing with the most vulnerable people in our society.

The LNP members welcome the recent changes to the committee structure, but the fact of the matter is that the member for Surfers Paradise and I could have gone on for another 10 hours with our questions. We have a serious portfolio, with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General particularly. Given more time, we could have got through at least another half of the questions that we did. There are serious issues with SPER and this government is not addressing those issues.

(Time expired)