




Speech by

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MEMBER FOR INALA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

 **Ms PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.15 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the report of the Finance and Administration Committee. This year marked the first appearance of the Premier, the member for Ashgrove, before an estimates committee of the parliament. Unfortunately for the people of Queensland the Premier's performance fell short of what is expected from the leader of this state. He was evasive in his responses, which highlighted his lack of preparation for these important hearings and his inability to grasp the detail of his own government's decisions. I was very concerned from the questioning at the hearing that it was quite evident that the Premier was lacking in showing compassion for the people that he was elected to serve.

I also want to point out that the funding that has been slashed to the non-government organisations includes particularly \$368 million in communities, \$120 million in health and \$60 million in local government. The Premier was unable to detail any information about the number of people in these community sector organisations who will lose their jobs or what services will go as a result of these funding cuts. The Premier did not provide the number of people losing their jobs as part of abolishing 14,000 FTEs from the Public Service.

The Premier's failure to understand the impacts of his decisions also extends to government owned corporations. When asked about job cuts in GOCs, the Premier deflected responsibility and said that it was a matter for the boards. Yet his government has direct impact upon board decisions and strategies by ripping \$256 million out of Energex, Ergon and Powerlink. The opposition's fears for jobs in GOCs was well founded—after estimates, it was revealed that 500 jobs are being cut from Ergon.

The Premier's refusal to tell Queenslanders how many people are losing their jobs rather than the number of full-time equivalents, as I mentioned earlier, demonstrates that either he is not committed to openness and transparency or he may not know. The Premier's answer indicates that the LNP started on a program of job cuts without fully understanding who will be affected, what front-line services will be impacted and what the flow-on economic impacts of these job losses will be, particularly in regional communities. As many members in this House here represent regional communities, I am quite sure that over the coming weeks and months their impact will be felt. The LNP is showing all the hallmarks of a government focused on ideology and not evidence.

The Premier's vagueness extended to infrastructure. When asked a very simple question to identify new infrastructure projects funded in this year's budget other than a new CBD office tower, the Premier listed two projects. Unfortunately, the two that he mentioned are not really detailed in the budget papers. However, there was one particular infrastructure project that the Premier had some understanding of and that should be no surprise to members here—and that is his plan for a brand-new shiny office tower for himself and his ministers. Then the Premier was forced to admit that nearly \$70,000 has been spent on refurbishments to the existing Executive Building since the election just six months ago, despite the plans to demolish it and build a brand-new tower.

There was also another matter I wanted to address. However, I do want to put on record that that matter has now been referred by the Clerk to the Ethics Committee and it would not be appropriate for me to go into details in relation to that matter.

I want to comment on the estimates process because it is a hallmark of transparency and openness where the opposition of the day and the government get to reflect on the budget and ask very important questions on behalf of the Queenslanders whose voices cannot be heard. The one thing that came out of this committee which I must emphasise is that people are unhappy about the job cuts that are occurring as part of this government's plan. Unfortunately, the impacts from this are going to be felt for a long time and they will be felt right throughout the state over the years to come. Those people who have been sacked will not forget who made this happen. It did not happen through their own actions; it happened through the actions of this government—a government that does not understand people, a government that does not care about people, a government that does not care about the services that governments are supposed to undertake.