




Speech by

Darren Grimwade

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

 **Mr GRIMWADE** (Morayfield—LNP) (11.25 pm): I rise tonight to speak on the Transport, Housing and Local Government Committee's budget estimates report tabled before the parliament and on the Appropriation Bill before the House. May I start tonight by addressing the Transport and Main Roads portfolio. Let me thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads for his involvement in the estimates process. There are certainly some exciting things happening in this portfolio that will benefit the constituents in my electorate. The estimates hearing highlighted significant areas of waste that occurred under the previous Labor government and also highlighted a number of new initiatives that will positively flow to the residents of my electorate.

Some areas of waste of the previous Labor government that were detailed throughout the hearing included a \$750,000 backpack program. It was revealed in the hearing that the previous government spent \$750,000 buying 190,000 backpacks that were somehow expected to get people on to public transport. It was also revealed that 58,000 of these backpacks were still stuffed away collecting dust in a room and that they were never used. It was sobering to hear the minister advise the committee that these remaining backpacks will be donated to charities and put to good use.

Another area of waste highlighted throughout the committee hearing was \$43,000 spent on installing 24 electric car charging sockets at 313 Adelaide Street. Honourable members may ask what is so bizarre about this. I can tell them that the minister advised the committee that we do not have any electric cars. This is the sort of ridiculous waste that is highlighted day in and day out that has been uncovered by this government, and it highlights to the people of Queensland how the previous Labor government lost its way and it explains the current financial mess we find ourselves in today.

I want to move on to the positives that the committee heard throughout the estimates hearing. We heard that this year's budget has a record funding announcement for public transport, with \$1.6 billion being spent. One of the areas where mums and dads in my electorate will benefit from the Newman government's election commitments will be the offering of free travel after nine paid trips for go card users on the public transport system. In fact \$39 million is being spent over the next four years to offer relief to regular, loyal commuters, and 80,000 public transport users will benefit with 200,000 trips already taken. This budget funding will bring cost-of-living relief to people in my electorate and will be most definitely welcomed.

Another cost-of-living relief budget allocation highlighted during the hearing that is welcomed on behalf of the residents in my electorate includes the commitment to freeze motor vehicle registration on family motor vehicles for the entire term of this government. This is fantastic news for the people in my electorate who have suffered from an increase of over 30 per cent in motor vehicle registration costs over the past three years as the previous Labor government hiked taxes in an effort to pay for its woeful management.

May I move on to the housing portfolio and thank the Minister for Housing for his time during the estimates hearing. When the Newman government came to power, it was revealed that there were over 30,000 applicants on waiting lists for public housing. During the hearing, I asked the minister for an update on the waiting lists and to update the committee on actions being undertaken to lower the waiting lists in Queensland. I was pleased to hear that the current waiting list was 27,000, which was a reduction of 3,000 applications since forming government.

Actions such as addressing the under-occupancy issue have been successful in using current budget allocations to get great outcomes and ensure more families have a roof over their heads. The under-occupancy issue was a major concern. Honourable members will remember that there were thousands of bedrooms throughout houses in Queensland that were sitting vacant while families were being forced to live on the streets. In my electorate, the department has done a fantastic job in consulting public housing tenants who have had surplus spare rooms in their homes and working with them to relocate them to smaller homes—thus freeing up houses so that those who have been on waiting lists for some time could finally find a place to live.

I was contacted by multiple constituents who praised our local department for their consultation and the efforts they made to accommodate their needs, such as pets, family and medical requirements. I look forward to the continued efforts by the minister and departmental staff as they work towards lowering the housing waiting lists in my area and putting more and more families into homes in Queensland.

I am conscious of my time limits in speaking tonight, so I will finish with the last portfolio that our committee is responsible for, that being local government. I congratulate the Minister for Local Government, firstly, on being so proactively involved in his portfolio. The Minister for Local Government revealed in his hearing that, since being elected in March this year, he has personally visited and met with all the mayors and councillors from every Queensland council. That is 73 councils in total. During the hearing the minister was questioned on things such as the recent local government elections, deamalgamations and party houses. These were among a whole raft of areas that the minister was able to provide an insight into for the committee. I know from speaking to mayors and councillors that this minister was well on track to heal the wounds that councils suffered due to the previous government's forced amalgamations in which councils became the whipping boy of the state government.

I will finish by thanking all the ministers, departmental staff, committee members, committee secretariat and parliamentary staff for their involvement in the process of this year's estimates.