




Speech By  
**Hon. David Crisafulli**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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**APPROPRIATION BILLS: TRANSPORT, HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (11.28 pm): I will start by saying that I am looking forward to making this brief contribution in reply to the estimates. I have the honour of going first tonight because the member for Warrego, the chairman of the committee, is ill. The committee had a running cricket theme, so I will say that we have reversed the batting order because he has pulled up stumps early.

The reason my contribution is brief is because the estimates for my part of the portfolio fell very, very flat, and it did so for the second year in a row because yet again the only questions that I received from those opposite centred on just one of the state's 73 local governments. I would love to take questions on all local councils and the recovery in general, but it seems that there is only one council that is fixed in the minds of those opposite, particularly the member for Mackay. It is interesting that when they were in government there was a lot of interest centred on Brisbane, and not much has changed now that they are in opposition. It is a great disappointment to me that I had to sit there and field questions on absolutely trivial matters when so much is going on in my portfolio.

They proved it with their plodding, misdirected questions that uncovered not one new fact about the council's financial position for the second year in a row. As anyone who has taken the time to look at the state's local government books knows, Brisbane City Council is well down the list of councils for debt per capita and its financial outlook is strong. That is the end of the story.

**Mr Nicholls:** QTC said that, didn't they?

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** QTC did say that. But it became obvious as time wore on that Labor's questions were predominantly written by their colleagues in BCC. They had absolutely no interest whatsoever.

**Mr Nicholls:** Nothing has changed. When they were in BCC the questions were written by the people up here.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Indeed. The truth is: this will be a huge year for local government in Queensland as we rebuild from the natural disasters and ensure that this year truly is the year of delivery. There is \$4 billion set aside in this year's SDS for the state's recovery. That certainly is not insignificant. Of that, \$80 million will be spent through the betterment fund. That is a component I am particularly proud of and will continue to talk about in this House. That is about not just replacing assets like for like but building them stronger for the next time around. It will break the dumb cycle of replacing like for like. This fund marks a change in culture, and we have set an agenda for the rest of Australia to follow. Still, it was not groundbreaking enough to attract a single question from those opposite. Instead I was asked—

... are you able to advise when a profit is expected for Legacy Way?

Back in the real world, councils are achieving a cracking pace in their recovery efforts. Something that is being reflected in local governments around the state is the speed of the recovery, council by council. I mentioned the fantastic efforts of Bundaberg in turning around their application. I would like to think that a lot of it has to do with the close working relationship that has developed between these two levels of government. I am particularly proud of what has been done, but there is a mountain of work to go this year. Instead, I was asked—

... are you concerned about the level of debt at the Brisbane City Council ...?

That question came after I articulated exactly what I have said this evening. Anyone who knows or cares about Queensland's local governments—not just Brisbane—would know that there were real issues in the past two financial years with councils being able to deliver on the ground. That is why it is so important this year that we set goals and deliver, as 57 councils rebound from the events of 2013. The cynical way the previous state government administered grants certainly did not help councils with their delivery. That is something we have changed this year. I was at pains to explain that in the SDS. It will be delivered differently this year. Did that raise a question? No. Instead, I was asked—

There was a meeting that occurred between the QTC, the Treasurer and the council. Did you attend ...?

I am sure my colleagues and those opposite get the drift. Despite my love for local government across the state, after this year's estimates hearing even I have to admit defeat when it comes to Labor lifting its gaze from George Street, where—you guessed it—Brisbane City Council's office is.

I conclude by thanking the chairman for his stewardship of the committee; all members, including the member for Mackay who asked questions on behalf of the opposition; those involved in the process; and those staff from the Department of Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience and the Queensland Reconstruction Authority.

*(Time expired)*