




Speech By  
**Curtis Pitt**

**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2014

## **COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY—REPORT NO. 12, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE**

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.17 am): I rise to speak to this motion and join with my colleagues to suggest that the government tried something, has failed at that and, of course, is now running away with its tail between its legs. Earlier I heard the member for Gaven yell out something which I think was a little bit unparliamentary, but I think it was right. This was all about making sure that this government avoided scrutiny at a time when it did not need it at all. We have seen a backlash from the community. We have seen a backlash from the media. In fact, I noticed that today there is some suggestion in the Victorian parliament that it is going to try to outlaw dorothy dixers being asked. The media would love that, just as I am sure it now loves the fact that the government has taken on Labor's policy of reinstating estimates back to its original state. That is the most important decision we have seen this government do probably this year, because the rest of its decisions have done nothing but harm Queensland. Finally, this is something that is going to open ourselves back up to some scrutiny, and that is important.

I completely share the view of my honourable colleague from the electorate of Rockhampton. He very much put forward a very important part of this estimates hearing process. It is all about the members of this parliament. It is about the crossbenches. It is about the Independents. I felt for them the most, because it was practically impossible for one person as an Independent to get right across all of those estimates committees. They are the people who I felt for the most.

Of course, again we saw the Leader of the House come into this place to berate me about apparently ineffectual questioning. I really think that is an important point to address. We had the Treasurer here who, because he had not been asked a direct question for some time, continued to say, 'I have no questions. I have not been asked any questions. I am never asked a question. Why won't you ask me a question?' When it comes to what happened at the estimates hearing, he has amnesia. We have asked hundreds of questions of the Treasurer at estimates hearings—many questions of the Treasurer—but they were not answered and this was at a time when they should have been answered.

The whole estimates process was a time-wasting exercise as well. It was not just the fact that we had long, drawn-out answers; we had particularly long, drawn-out answers to those dorothy dixers that I mentioned earlier. Of course, when it came to answering questions from the opposition or the crossbenches, the Treasurer's answers were far more succinct—'We will give you next to nothing.' The worst example was when the Treasurer got the Under Treasurer, in answer to a question, instead of tabling a document that referred to the dividends from government owned corporations and TEPs and what that was going to mean going forward, to read it out, line by line, box by box, wasting the committee's time. I thought that was one of the worst examples of time wasting and slowdown that we have seen. That is the sort of thing that we have come to expect from this government.

Of course, the estimates committee process was all about burying the government's worst performers. Last night I said that the Attorney-General has not been seen for some time. He has finally popped his head up. When we were having our discussion this morning about pirates, it was good to see the Attorney-General again being the parrot on the Premier's shoulder. That was wonderful. The Attorney-General seems to have gone into some LNP-sponsored witness protection program. No-one knew where he was. He had completely disappeared. He had been buried in a committee room that at one stage I think was not going to have any television coverage. That is how much they wanted to bury the problematic Attorney-General.

Of course, this motion raises the matter of the questions that were asked during the estimates committee process. The opposition leader has talked about the fact that she and I both asked questions about the Strong Choices advertising campaign—'How much money are you spending? What are you going to be doing into the future? Will you be spending more money? How much have you spent to date?' None of those questions were getting answered, certainly not to the satisfaction of the opposition and, I would argue, not to the satisfaction of Queenslanders, either.

This morning we had the Premier answering questions about a range of things, again trying to pretend that a lease is not an asset sale. I keep finding that very funny. He is saying that a lease is not an asset sale. If he thinks that and all of those other members opposite think that as well, then very clearly they are all still drinking the Kool-Aid.