




Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2014

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (Leader of the House) (11.07 am): I rise to speak to the CLA report on the 2014 trial of the estimates committee process. I am disappointed to hear the Leader of the Opposition ranting about opportunities that she has not had to question correctly through that estimates process the machinations of the government and the budget that is brought forward, which is the correct and proper process for estimates.

I point out to the Leader of the Opposition that, with 22 staff at their disposal, they are the most well resourced opposition ever for nine members of a parliamentary team, costing the Queensland taxpayers somewhere, I believe, in the vicinity of \$2.7 million. That they cannot get these political servants to come up with questions to test the budget in the time that was allotted, to make themselves into a relevant opposition, is a very sad state of affairs, when they had more time.

Those opposite had more opportunity to question the Treasurer. The member for Mulgrave had a far longer session to question the Treasurer on matters and completely failed in his capacity as an opposition Treasury spokesman to ask any relevant question whatsoever or put the government under pressure. However, I certainly want to take the opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Service, which did a wonderful job under new circumstances doing the hard work to ensure the trial of simultaneous hearings held on 15 and 17 July was conducted successfully and delivered the appropriate outcome. As the report outlines and as was the intention of the government at the time, significantly more time was available—significantly more time was available; I will say it again: significantly more time was available—for members to question ministers and senior public servants in relation to budget estimates. Also, generally the amount of time spent asking non-government questions increased from the time spent in 2013. There is nothing wrong with reviewing processes and trying to improve outcomes for both the public and for the opposition given its incapacities and its vacuous sinkhole of political knowledge to deal with matters put before it in more time and space.

However, following consultation and community feedback and the actual hearings and putting in place the hearings right across-the-board, the government considered the results of the trial and has decided to not continue with the trial arrangements and revert to the usual estimates committee process for future years. This government is about improving its performances in all areas. That includes media access to information that the opposition should be providing through the grilling of the government under the Westminster system, which was obviously lacking and missing from this particular overresourced opposition, unfortunately. Perhaps next year when we revert to the previous system it will again maybe go out and hire through its own moneys some extra political advisers to give it a set of questions that actually puts some real hurt on the government and brings the government to further account rather than the very poor and puerile efforts that opposition members showed during the estimates of this year. We do not resile from the fact that we are always looking to

improve access to government information, as evidenced by our open data initiative. From the Premier's perspective and the government's perspective, we are the most open, accountable and transparent government. We will continue to try ways to improve information delivery to the taxpayers of Queensland and it is up to opposition members to get their act together to make sure that extra time is not wasted through political inadequacies—

(Time expired)