




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report

 **Mrs D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (5.58 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee's consideration of the 2014-15 portfolio budget estimates. At the outset, the opposition would like to thank the witnesses who appeared before the committee to assist with its consideration of the appropriations. They answered questions for members of the committee in a forthright and diligent manner that greatly assisted the committee to understand the issues raised. However, the decision of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to change the allocation of time between government and non-government members was disappointing to say the least, and we have heard the member for Nicklin speak about that in this debate tonight. An analysis of the time actually allocated to non-government members for questions and answers indicates that on 15 July 2014 only marginally more than one-third of the time was given to non-government members, the balance being given to government members. Despite being granted leave by the committee to attend one of the sessions, the opposition leader was not allocated any time for questions and the other non-government members were required to forgo their questions and defer to the opposition leader in order for her to be able to ask a single question of the Attorney-General. The Attorney must be feeling under considerable threat when the committee has to go to such lengths to protect a minister from scrutiny by non-government members.

In relation to the CMC, following a reduction in funding for the CMC in the past two budgets, the government has finally decided to increase funding. However, in order to illustrate the effectiveness of the increased funding, the Attorney pointed to crime statistics mentioned by the Police Commissioner in a newspaper article. The Attorney-General's reference to reductions of 10 per cent in crime across all crime in Queensland has since been qualified by the commissioner. As the commissioner has explained, those figures were for reported offences which exclude what are described as 'other offences'. Those have increased by 10.4 per cent. An analysis of Queensland Police Service statistics shows that the crime rate in Queensland across all crime has dropped by only 2.1 per cent in the past financial year, which is part of a decade-long downward trend in crime, except for the past two years which saw increases in crime. In fact, the 2.1 per cent reduction is a small reduction following a similar rise of two per cent the previous financial year under the Newman government. This merely brings Queensland back to virtually the same position it was in, in terms of crime statistics, when the Newman government took office.

The question the opposition asked the Attorney-General in relation to court transcription services showed that there has been a total failure of policy in the outsourcing of this important service. When the Attorney-General announced that Auscript had been selected to provide the service, he also announced that the expected savings for the department were \$6 million per annum. Questions on notice provided information that those savings are not even close to being realised. The actual savings are, in fact, \$2.4 million in its first full year of operation. The Attorney also advised that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General was on track to save a notional \$1.2 million as a

result of no longer having to maintain office space. Not only is there a minimal saving to the department but there is also a significantly increased cost to users of the service. The cost of purchasing a transcript for a full day's hearing in a civil matter in the Supreme Court rose from \$1,267.90 to \$2,189.88 in the financial year 2013-14, from when it was provided by the State Reporting Bureau and when it was provided by Auscript. This means that the cost for litigants has almost doubled under the outsourcing model. The court reporters who were made redundant through this process are still feeling the hurt of having their lives turned upside-down and will take little comfort from the revelations surrounding the Attorney-General in relation to this outsourcing project. The transcription service has been outsourced to a company that donated \$2,000 to the LNP and whose managing director has donated a further \$5,000, as has InteRisk, another company of which the same person is director. That is a web of \$12,000 worth of related donations to the LNP.

Finally, the opposition continued pointing out the problems with the Attorney-General's boot camps. It was revealed that eight out of 10 youths who attended the sentenced youth boot camps had already reoffended. The Attorney-General failed to adequately explain why he overruled his expert panel and awarded the Fraser Coast boot camp to the 10th ranked tenderer, the same organisation that reportedly started building residences before the tender was awarded.