




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, Report

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.53 pm): I am disappointed in the member for Mirani, but maybe I should not be, because as the member is a lifetime member of the CFMEU he has to be in the protection racket. The member for Mirani doth protest too much in regard to ministers being asked to answer for their portfolios and for the decisions of this Labor government. Parliament has barely sat since the Palaszczuk Labor government came to power. In fact, I have heard some members lamenting the fact that they need a GPS to find Parliament House because it has been so long since the House sat.

However, the estimates process happened recently. People rightfully came together to ask this government to answer questions with respect to the budget put to the parliament and to answer for the decisions that it is making on behalf of Queenslanders. The decisions the government is making will affect not just this budget but also the lives of people into the future in terms of how money is spent and how those decisions transpired. Since the change of government, we have seen a real limbo; nothing has happened. Therefore, to hear the chairman of this committee complaining that ministers are being asked to be held to account is just a little bit rich. We make no apologies for standing up for Queenslanders and asking those questions in the parliamentary committee structure, because that is what it is there for. It is not about protecting ministers from being asked questions. They need to front up and answer questions that are asked on behalf of our constituents.

Of course, with the bundling together of portfolios into one super portfolio, this committee covered a number of areas. A number of those areas will be spoken to by my colleagues, so I will speak to my area of concern, which is local government. Legislative decisions of government across other portfolios impact greatly on local government. It is not just about the grant money that is given to local government; it is about the legislation that government passes that has an impact. Therefore, it was quite reasonable for me to ask the local government minister, who is also the Deputy Premier and minister for many things, about the impact of legislation and whether it is being monitored in regard to local government. However, despite the introduction of quite dramatic legislation that will have significant cost impacts for local government, it appears that the department that presides over local government sits back and does not monitor that legislation. It monitors only the legislation under its immediate remit. It stands back and, once again, pays no attention to the full impact of government.

Government has an impact in respect to the legislative regulatory red tape that it puts around the lives of other people. The LNP philosophically believes that legislation should be there to enable and facilitate and also to set people free to get on with their lives, rather than fundamentally stopping them from setting up businesses in a reasonable way. The same is true of local government. Under this government, legislation has been brought forward and the Local Government Association of Queensland complained, understandably, that it could impact upon jobs in that sector. Who ultimately

pays for that? It is the local communities that they represent. In this particular case, it was to do with industrial relations legislation. While that is under the remit of another minister, it should have been directly monitored by the Deputy Premier, who should not be taking her eye off the ball in regard to its huge cost impact upon local government. We are expecting other legislation that I am not allowed to talk about because it is coming before the House—but some might say it is about workers compensation—will have a similar impact on a number of communities throughout Queensland.

It is time that the government took responsibility for the costs that it is passing on to people. You cannot on the one hand say, 'We're going to give more grants,' but with the other hand rip money out of people's pockets and say, 'It's not my responsibility.' It is the responsibility of this government to come clean and to stand up to scrutiny. While the chairman of this committee has just complained about scrutiny, I say tough luck! That is what we are here to do. We are here to hold this government to account, to demand better for Queenslanders and to say that it is time the government got its hands out of the pockets of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)