




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.29 pm): I rise to address another year's estimates hearing and the report tabled by the Transportation and Utilities Committee. I guess the only thing we and Queenslanders learned is that this is another typical Labor budget. I pick up where the minister just left off; I want to start with the so-called Accelerated Works Program. The minister himself has just confirmed that the average acceleration is about three months. In fact, most were accelerated by only about one month and one was, heaven forbid, delivered the same month it was anticipated to be delivered before it was accelerated. I guess when you are asleep at the wheel and you put your foot flat on the pedal the best you can probably achieve is a one-month acceleration. I say well done to the Labor government on accelerating those works programs. I would hate to see what would happen if they were not accelerating them. We would probably be waiting for them for years to come.

I want to pick up also on the fact that, like a true Labor budget, what we see is the spending of taxpayers' dollars on aspects that are being well and truly delivered by the private sector. The first of those was the announcement by the minister that they spent \$300,000 developing an app for learner drivers—an app that the RACQ had already developed—and they are spending \$100,000 to keep that maintained year in, year out. Labor governments have such a great track record when it comes to IT! 'Let's recreate the wheel! Let's recreate an app that the RACQ already has!' It goes even further than that. They want to spend taxpayers' dollars getting our transport infrastructure ready for driverless cars when Google, BMW and Mercedes are spending private dollars getting their vehicles ready to drive on our transport infrastructure. Why we are wasting money on infrastructure—

Mr Bailey: They are two different things.

Mr POWELL: If they are two different things, why did the minister not take the question on notice? Why would he not come clean with the people of Queensland as to exactly how much taxpayers' money he is wasting doing the job of Google, Mercedes and BMW? It went even further than that. The minister did not even know that it was maritime services Queensland that have the contract for pilotage at the port of Brisbane. He had to take that one on notice and cleared it up to the effect that at least we may see some movement in that contract in coming years.

I turn now to the Minister for Transport. Like the Deputy Premier before him, when he was asked to rule out public transport levies as a means of paying for the failed Cross River Rail business case, the minister refused to do so. This is yet another Labor government that is refusing to rule out slugging Queenslanders through levies or through tax increases—this one being to public transport to fund Cross River Rail.

I want to pick up on some of the comments made by the chair. For the first time ever I saw a chair try to prevent a line of questioning on the basis that the government was undertaking an independent review. Crumbs! If that was the case, we probably could not ask any questions at estimates given that this government is reviewing everything that is nailed down and a lot of things that are not. The reality

is that had we got to estimates and we were not allowed to ask questions simply because the government was reviewing things, there would not have been anything to ask.

It goes further. I am not sure which committee hearing the chair was at because he claims that the minister refuted what I clearly heard. The minister and the CEO of Queensland Rail disputed what had previously been seen in the media that Queensland Rail did not raise issues regarding the Moreton Bay Rail Link signalling system until late 2015, early 2016. The reason the questioning stopped is that made it abundantly clear that decisions made under the LNP government around this signalling contract were not involved in what has subsequently gone wrong. As we have seen through the RTI documents recently received by the opposition office and as we have seen through the media reports since, what has become abundantly clear is that the minister is caught in a turf war between two of his agencies. They are giving him contrary advice. The reality is that this Palaszczuk Labor government is asleep at the wheel on the Moreton Bay Rail Link, like it is on so many things. All this estimates hearing showed is that this a classic Labor budget.