




Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.27 pm): I rise to address this year's budget estimates for the Appropriation Bill 2016 and specifically the Agriculture and Environment Committee's area of responsibility in scrutinising the relevant estimates papers and proposed expenditure by the Palaszczuk Labor government with respect to Environment and Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef.

The LNP opposition is very concerned with many areas of this portfolio, especially the obvious exploitation of the portfolio by the government and the minister as a political tool on key hot button voter issues such as the Great Barrier Reef, koalas and World Heritage listings, as opposed to developing and implementing evidence based policy. At estimates the minister was unable to provide simple and clear answers on mining application approvals and at times appeared to be almost deliberately vague, eventually agreeing to take a number of straightforward questions on notice, particularly with respect to approvals in Great Barrier Reef catchment areas.

Estimates revealed there is no new money for koala habitat areas compared with the \$15 million that was provided in 2015-16. The minister's vagueness on this point and his inability to cite any specific data for his decision not to fund further purchases of habitat areas was puzzling and worrying and appears to be a complete reversal on the focus that was held up as necessary to save the species last year. This can only be described as policy inconsistency at taxpayers' expense.

Turning to national parks, an area of concern was the projected growth in visits which certainly did not appear to be evidence based and will probably not be achieved. The forecasts from the government appear inflated. As they are tied to predicted income from user fees and charges, projected to be up 20.5 per cent to \$26.311 million, this leaves a cloud over operating funds for national parks.

Like his predecessor in the Agriculture and Fisheries session, the environment minister would appear to be playing politics with the businesses and jobs in the commercial fishing sector, particularly around the Fraser Coast, Tin Can Bay and Hervey Bay, with plans for further World Heritage listings. The environment minister appears to have no regard for the economic impact any additional area listing would have on many family run businesses and the hundreds of local jobs that are directly supported by commercial fishing. Coming on top of the release of the government's green paper on fisheries management, the minister's move to expand World Heritage listed areas around the Fraser Coast is a very worrying signal from a government that has been shown up for running fishery policy on base politics with not a shred of supporting scientific data.

There is little doubt that the Palaszczuk Labor government's \$1.8 million—\$6.8 million over four years—climate change strategy could include the further development of a carbon tax for Queensland. Both state and federal Labor have always been supporters of carbon taxes with little regard for the impost or cost impacts on hardworking Queenslanders. There is no doubt that whilst climate change is real and has occurred over thousands of years, what has always been in scientific dispute is the extent

of man's contribution. Having said that, Queensland must be part of delivering both national and international evidence based strategies for our environment in a collaborative and balanced manner which recognises and mitigates not only economic impacts but also cost-of-living pressures on ordinary Queenslanders, including my constituents in Moggill. Whilst also valuing and respecting our current energy sources and industries, ongoing strategies with respect to affordable renewable energy solutions must be developed and supported in a collaborative and coordinated manner with respect to other state jurisdictions and the Commonwealth of Australia. Labor's budget could have done more in regards to this.

Given the minister's and the Palaszczuk Labor government's continued legislative demonisation of the mining and resources sector along with rural landholders and graziers with extremist green rhetoric, I remain somewhat dubious as to the government's real agenda with respect to balanced environmental policy and subsequent funded initiatives in this year's budget. Despite the government allocating \$1.7 million—\$5.8 million over three years—to crocodile management, both Labor and the environment minister delayed doing anything for nearly 16 months simply because this is a Labor government intent on reviewing and not doing. Whilst the principles and policy objectives of an environmental chain of responsibility framework are supported by the LNP, what is clear and is not supported by the Liberal National Party is Labor's poorly drafted legislation. This year's budget provided no clarity as to projected impacts on the resources sector, prohibitive financial assurance impacts or any information on the proposed progress of statutory guidelines to resolve a lack of legislative clarity.

I do acknowledge the collaboration of both the Queensland and federal governments with respect to the conjoint implementation of the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan and the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan.

In concluding, I make an overall assessment and comment with respect to this year's budget. We know this year's budget is one of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. Without realistic and sustainable economic strategies, the Queensland government will be forced to adjust and cut spending with respect to my shadow ministerial portfolio areas, and this year's state budget would appear to be the beginning of reduced funding.