




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (11.14 pm): It gives me pleasure to rise tonight to contribute to the estimates committee report debate. It appears that the Labor Party have gone to sleep over there tonight and do not want to talk about this particular subject.

This is the fifth estimates that I have attended. I must say that estimates is not getting any better. The Labor Party has made a complete mockery of estimates. We are looking at hundreds of billions of dollars worth of assets in the energy and water sectors and yet we were given two hours to ask questions of the minister. One hour of that was dedicated to Labor government members asking their Dorothy Dixers and getting their prepared answers back and the minister criticising the former government. He spent all his time criticising the former government when we have people who are very worried indeed about the cost of electricity and they deserve answers to their questions.

I fired off my first question in estimates this year. I got about four words out of my mouth before one of the government members opposite wanted to know where in the SDS my question related. I had not even got to the point of my question before they wanted to protect their minister and ask about the SDS. At that point I said, 'Every question that I have today has a reference to the SDS. Do not bother asking me because I have one.' It kept coming all day.

I want to talk about a couple of issues involving the energy sector because that is what is really concerning the people of Queensland. I refer to the deregulation of energy. This was put in place by the LNP government in 2014 to come to fruition on 1 July 2015. When this Labor government was elected they said that the people of Queensland had not had an education program and they did not know that deregulation was coming so they delayed it for a year. They did not bother to try to put an education program in place. Instead they delayed the whole process by a year. They blamed the lack of an education program for that.

After the Productivity Commission said that deregulation was actually a good thing for the people of Queensland and it would save them between \$100 and \$400 a year the Labor Party said. 'Let us put deregulation in place. We will set it to commence from 1 July 2016.' Would members not think that when they delayed deregulation for a year because of a lack of education that they would go out and get an education program going and tell the people of Queensland exactly how they are going to benefit.

They did not. They spent \$239,000 on a consultant to come up with an education program. They did not actually put an education plan in until three weeks after deregulation started. We only have one new company that has come into Queensland since deregulation has started. That is because of a lack of effort by this government. They do not care about electricity prices. They do not care that businesses are going broke. They do not care that people cannot afford the cost of living in this state because of the things they have done. They do not care about Queenslanders at all. We saw that at estimates.

I also want to speak about Energy Queensland. We have a \$24½ billion quango that has been amalgamated from Ergon and Energex. Given that this was an election promise by the Labor Party and they have been in power for 18 months we would think that they would have themselves organised. Energy Queensland is in place. It has a website.

If people do a quick google search they will not find Energy Queensland anywhere. It is not unless people know the website address of Energy Queensland that they can look it up. They cannot contact Energy Queensland. They cannot email them. They cannot ring them up. They cannot go and see them. We do not know who they are. There is no business plan for them. There is an amount of savings that could have been had. I will table part of the web page that shows that there are now four chief executives involved in Energy Queensland where there were only two before. How are we actually saving money by this merger when there are four chief executives?

Tabled paper: Extract, undated, from the Energy Queensland website, titled 'Coming together for the future of energy' [[1267](#)].