



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

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

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.35 pm): I rise to speak on the budget estimates for the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. From the outset I would like to congratulate Mr Speaker on his judicious running of the Parliamentary Service. I also congratulate the Clerk of the Parliament for providing great service and for keeping up with the needs of parliamentarians and the changing environment in which we exist today.

I would also like to thank the chair of the committee, the member for Sunnybank, on his equitable and fair conduct of the estimates process for this particular bill and as we move on to successfully implement many new issues such as the extra staff for the management of parliamentary committees which is an absolutely important part of this whole parliamentary process. The level 7 extensions are going ahead and have run into some problems that were unforeseen in terms of the wet weather and the asbestos that added to the problems. All in all, the Parliamentary Service is acting appropriately. I would also like to thank the staff who assisted the FAC as part of overseeing that part of the Parliamentary Service—in particular, one Amanda Honeyman, who has been very successful in keeping a lot of members in a straight line.

There were a couple of issues that were raised at the estimates hearing that I do have concerns with and have concerns with the answers that were given. The opposition leader raised matters in relation to the member for Cook. It was suggested by the Clerk that the Leader of the House had approached the Clerk of the Parliament for changes to the office accommodation. The reason given at estimates was that the member for Cook was too close to members and that he would be unduly hassled, if you like, by members in the Parliamentary Annexe. I cannot think of any worse place to be than in the parliamentary offices in the old building where you get hassled by ministers, assistant ministers and where the whips hang out—oh, all on the government side. Isn't that amazing! That was a lame duck excuse that was brought to estimates, and it is very, very disappointing. It is like they want to keep the member for Cook well and truly in the fold even though he is actually the de facto member for Cook these days and not a member of the ALP anymore.

One other issue that was raised at estimates in response to the member for Bundamba was that the Clerk of the Parliament was looking at conditions of electorate office staff. I note that the Clerk of the Parliament was very much engaging with the Together union as he looked at the conditions and working futures of EOs and AEOs. I can assure the House that the staff in my office are not in the Together union. It is not their interest. There may be 42 members out there who have staff members in the Together union, but I sincerely urge the Clerk of the Parliament to take any matters in relation to work conditions and directions into his own hands, independent of the Together union.

I would hope that there has been no government interference in terms of suggesting that the Together union be part of the Clerk's review of the working conditions of electorate office staff and assistant electorate office staff. They are totally independent. They are very much the working wheels behind parliamentary members, and they should have unfettered opportunity to work with the Clerk of the Parliament to come up with appropriate conditions.

I will get in one quick plug for a matter that is close to my heart—it is a matter that should be close to the hearts of all members of this House—and that is the infamous family friendly hours of parliament, as they refer to them in other parliaments. In other parliaments all around Australia they have worked to put in hours that are appropriate in the 21st century, particularly for staff members. I would really like the CLA, under Mr Speaker's jurisdiction, to revisit the operation of the hours of this parliament.