



Speech By  
**Andrew Cripps**


**MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK**

---

Record of Proceedings, 2 March 2017

## ADJOURNMENT

### Questions on Notice

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (9.36 pm): During the last sitting of the Queensland parliament in 2016 I asked three separate questions on notice to the Premier in relation to a related matter of public expenditure across a number of government, public, corporate and statutory entities, namely questions on notice Nos 2197, 2254 and 2332. The matter in question was the total cost of fees and expenses paid to elders or representatives of traditional owners for welcomes to country or acknowledgements of native title holders for various financial years across ministerial offices, government departments, courts of law and tribunals, the Queensland parliament, the Office of the Governor, GOCs, commissions and statutory authorities.

When the answers to these questions on notice were tabled on 3 January 2017 the Premier's response to each of them was identical. The Premier asserted that it would be neither practical nor reasonable to divert resources to identify the information requested over the years concerned. The information request was indeed over a number of financial years. I am sure that most members would agree that questions are fundamental to holding the government to account. The failure to make any genuine attempt to answer questions on notice is not indicative of accountability or transparency on the part of the executive. It also impinges on the rights of members and the House generally and is therefore, I submit, a matter affecting the privileges of the House.

It is my understanding that the purpose of written questions on notice is to enable members to ask questions that require some detail in the answer. This opportunity is provided because members may need to ask detailed questions that a member could not reasonably expect the Premier or a minister to be able to provide in response to a question without notice during question time.

It is clear that no reasonable attempt whatsoever has been made to answer these three questions on notice even for the most recent financial years. I have taken some time to reflect on the Premier's answers to my questions on notice and have concluded that they are, in my opinion, clearly unsatisfactory as they represent a reasonable request for information that is in the public interest. If taxpayers' money is used to meet the fees and expenses paid to elders or representatives of traditional owners for welcomes to country or acknowledgements of native title holders, this public expenditure should reasonably be expected to be the subject of parliamentary scrutiny in the same way that any other public expenditure is subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

I have today written to the Speaker to request that he rule that these three questions have not been answered by the Premier, that they remain outstanding and they must be answered. In this regard I would note that, upon his election as Speaker in March 2015, the Speaker made a point of stating that when questions are asked and answers are given they will be relevant. I hope that the Speaker will ensure that they comply with all aspects of the standing rules and orders.