




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2018

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.19 pm): Secrecy, cover-ups, arrogance, protection racket—that is exactly what the Palaszczuk government delivered during the estimates process this year. It was unbelievable.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. It was a joke. It was an absolute joke of arrogance, secrecy, cover-up. John Mickel even called it a cover-up. 'A protection racket', I think were his words. The government members abused the standing orders and used their numbers on each and every committee to run a protection racket. That was especially the case for the Premier. It was unbelievable. It was a farce. It was an insult to the taxpayers of Queensland. It was quite simply a joke.

The Deputy Premier and Treasurer talked about the challenges. The challenges facing Queenslanders were not able to be established through the estimates committee process because they would not answer any of the questions we were asking them. Worse than that, the Premier was unable to answer the questions that were put to her. The Premier refused to answer questions about whether her office or department were consulted on the Attorney-General's decision to table the Queensland Family and Child Commission annual report over five months after it was delivered to the Premier. Obviously it was a terrible report that showed the seriousness of child deaths in Queensland. As soon as that report landed on the Premier's desk what did the Premier do? She took the commission out of her department soon after receiving the report. This is secrecy, a cover-up, arrogance and a protection racket, quite simply.

The Premier refused to answer a question about when her office made the decision to adopt the QCA's decision to increase the water bills of everyone in the south-east. The Premier was actually overseas on another one of her trade missions at the time.

We also asked the Premier about the size of the Queensland Public Service following the criticism of the Together union around the use of labour hire and other contract arrangements. The Premier was unable to answer that. The Premier could not say how many public servants were currently employed under her government. The Premier could not say, or worse still did not know, how many labour hire operators or consultants were employed within the Public Service. The Premier did not even seem to care let alone know.

It is hardworking Queenslanders' taxpayer dollars that are going into the Premier's junkets and salary. We have heard even more today about the cover-ups in terms of the Premier's spending around the Commonwealth Games. Through the estimates process the Premier showed a complete disregard for the people of Queensland. Estimates is not just about numbers; it is about ensuring better services for the people of Queensland. We know that the Public Service wage bill has increased by more than

\$5 billion but services have deteriorated. We know that the Premier and her ministers were unable to answer the questions through the estimates process and that they are simply unable to deliver for Queensland.

Through the process the Premier tried to justify spending of more than \$461,000 on overseas travel for her and her staff during her first 2½ years in office in her role as trade minister; however, the Premier was not even the trade minister during those 2½ years. That \$461,000 is in addition to the \$1.3 million that other Palaszczuk government ministers have spent on trade missions and travel overseas. This excessive spending by the Premier and her ministers clearly shows how out of touch she really is with everyday Queenslanders. It is quite incredible.

We would have imagined that the Premier would have wanted to talk about chickpeas—her once favourite subject when chickpea exports were doing well—given that that is within her Trade portfolio. No, not anymore; she is all chickpead out. Worse than that, the Premier was unable to justify why, given such a big market, the Premier did not send any of her ministers to India or Asia rather than USA.

The estimates process is there to shine a light on the government. It is obvious that this is a government of secrecy, cover-ups and a protection racket.

(Time expired)