



Speech By
Jessica Pugh

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

**State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development
Committee, Report**

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (2.00 pm): I rise to speak with regard to my first estimates hearing as part of the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee. As the member for Mount Ommaney, it was a wonderful opportunity to me to ask ministers for updates on issues that I have been lobbying the government on since I was elected. I will touch on those today.

For the residents of Oxley, the use of the Oxley secondary school site has been a matter of keen interest since the former tenants were evicted in 2014 by the Newman government. At the time, I remember meeting with the Premier—then the Leader of the Opposition—on site as she took her nieces to the ballet school that was located on the grounds. They were searching for a new home as the Newman government had asked them to leave.

Since that time the site has remained largely unused, except for police training and the wonderful childhood learning centre, Yuingi, which was located precariously on a flood plain. That is a crying shame, because it is a beautiful site, rich with natural wildlife and vegetation. I have been working closely with my community panel and local residents to ensure that the minister and Economic Development Queensland clearly understood the priorities of the local community. The Oxley locals were clear that they wanted to maximise the retention of natural vegetation and minimise the impact on our local amenity.

That is why during the estimates hearing I was thrilled to hear that the almost 20-hectare site will be declared a priority development area. That means that the full revitalisation of the site will be fast-tracked by the state government with a large number of uses for the site. That will include the creation of 74 leafy home sites, aged care for our seniors, a community centre, and the relocation of our beloved local childcare centre, Yuingi, out of the flood zone, which will become a community sports field.

Most importantly, there will be significant protected vegetation bands on the site. On the known slippage site adjoining Blackheath Road, there will be a large band of retained vegetation and remediation works. Over at Fort Road near Canossa, there will be a second significant area of vegetation retained in public hands. It was at the overwhelming request of the community that we retained the vegetation that makes this site so special. I pay tribute to the hard work of the Oxley community for ensuring that the minister and the department had a clear idea of their vision for the site. I am thrilled to see that the site will be revitalised for the community to use now and into the future.

Electricity prices affect each and every household in my electorate—and, indeed, in Queensland. Earlier this year, I was thrilled to notice that my existing retailer offered me—unprompted—a 26 per cent discount on my power bill if I just signed up to make direct debit payments. I had many constituents

making the same observations about their power bills and I was pleased to have the opportunity to ask why. The Palaszczuk government has kept power assets in public hands. That is why we have been able to invite a new energy retailer into the market. Alinta had been offering sizeable discounts well in excess of 20 per cent and other retailers were keen to compete. As a result, many Queenslanders are now requesting discounts from their retailers and they are getting them. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that is delivering a boost to the budgets of families throughout Queensland. I never miss an opportunity to encourage Queenslanders to hit up their retailers for a discount and I will do it again today.

Finally, I was pleased to ask the minister for agriculture about funding for Country Women's Association halls. I am proud to have a very active Oxley Queensland Country Women's Association in my electorate. Indeed, last Easter, their lovely hall hosted our inaugural hot cross bun competition, which I judged. The CWA will be catering for my seniors morning tea next week, where we will be raising some much needed funds for drought relief. Trivial Mill will be hosting a trivia night at the Oxley Bowls Club in October to raise more funds for drought relief in conjunction with the CWA. These incredibly hardworking women just do not stop. I am incredibly proud to support the women who support our rural communities. We know that the CWA have been longstanding advocates for drought relief. It is simply fantastic to see their efforts being rewarded.

These are just a few of the highlights for the community of Mount Ommaney. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to sit as part of the committee to ask questions. I commend the report to the House. I table a letter from the minister in response to a question asked by the member for Bundaberg.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 6 August 2018, from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, Hon. Mark Furner, to the member for Bancroft, Mr Chris Whiting MP, regarding clarification of the Department's Service Delivery Statement and FTE numbers [\[1172\]](#).