




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

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

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.05 pm): That was a prime example of a member who just wanted to talk about her own electorate and missed the opportunity to talk about the estimates process. However, I congratulate the member for Mount Ommaney for at least talking for one minute about electricity prices. As the shadow minister for energy, that is what I would like to focus on.

During the estimates process, as an indication of the low esteem in which the members opposite hold electricity in this state, one hour—at six o'clock at night—was allowed for debate on electricity. Of that hour, the non-government members had 30 minutes in which to ask questions. Out of those 30 minutes, there was about 20 minutes for the LNP to discuss the biggest issue facing people in Queensland at the moment and that is increased electricity prices. So far, we have heard from six members opposite about this estimates process. Only one of them spoke about electricity. The minister responsible, in his four-minute contribution, had a few words to say about electricity. That is how much they hold the people of Queensland in contempt.

Anybody who bothered to read *Hansard* from the estimates process or, in fact, watched the estimates process on TV would be aware of the protection racket that was run. The estimates process ran for an hour. After the first six minutes, the estimates process had not even started. In fact, in the time allotted, eight questions was all I was able to ask about the biggest issue in Queensland. It took 20 minutes to get through the first two questions because the minister waffled on about nothing in particular.

The big question that I wanted to ask at estimates was why it was that, in the 2016-17 budget, \$482 million was allocated to earnings from the generators yet, as we found out in this year's budget, that figure grew to \$1.24 billion. That is how much the members opposite taxed the people of Queensland with a hidden tax on electricity. It is a huge amount of money—\$758 million more than what they budgeted for. It is a coincidence, because that \$758 million is very close to the \$770 million the members opposite spent that year to take the SBS out of people's electricity bills for only three years.

During the estimates hearing, in the very short period that I was given to ask about electricity I managed to raise a few important issues. One was that Energy Queensland has a consultant who appears to be a business coach for the CEO. His company is being paid \$14,000 a day.

An opposition member: Nice if you can get it.

Mr HART: I take that interjection—very nice. Fourteen thousand dollars a day. We heard from the CEO of Energy Queensland that, in fact, over the past three years they spent \$15 million on consultants. One would think they would hire the right people to start with rather than getting consultants. No, they cannot do that.

Part of the government's Powering Queensland Plan was to put Swanbank E back on line. We learned that Swanbank E has not been generating any electricity for a few months now. Before that it did not generate much electricity either. We also learned that even though the minister thinks Wivenhoe-pumped hydro is being used, it is not. I am glad that the minister raised in his contribution CleanCo, because here we have a thousand megawatts of renewable energy that the DG of this department told us we did not really need unless we closed something down or we increased demand. I do not see too much demand being increased, but I suspect they may be thinking about closing something down.

Mr Minnikin: Mangocube to Simmo.

Mr HART: Maybe we can see some emails about that. CleanCo is a thousand megawatts of renewable energy at a cost of \$2 million to \$3 million a megawatt. It is a \$2 billion or \$3 billion project that is completely underfunded that will not happen until 2025. That is the big plan of those opposite to get down electricity prices. The estimates process was a joke. This government has made an absolute farce of the estimates system. The people of Queensland have been watching it. They have seen it and they know what they are like.