




Speech By
Stephen Andrew

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2018

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.45 pm): I rise to respond to the estimates report as a member of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. Firstly, I would like to commend my committee colleagues for the time and effort they put into the estimates report and the many departments and guests who delivered crucial information to help our committee make informed decisions.

Being a first-term member in this House, I sought leave to attend the estimates committee hearings for the first week. I was taken aback by the whole estimates hearings process. After witnessing the hearings, I am concerned that the process for these vital hearings is not exactly what I expected in terms of scrutinising the funding and expenditure of the government. I found limited opportunities to advocate for the best possible outcomes for my electorate and I found the democratic process to be very weak, if I am to be completely honest.

To add to this, being a crossbench member and despite being the member for Mirani, I do believe that I am excluded from any project announcements in my electorate. Rather, they are announced by other members outside of my electorate. This shows a clear lack of openness and transparency. With reference to the regional action plan documents as part of the 2018-19 budget publications, announcements have recently been made delivering for Mackay, Whitsunday and Central Queensland. They are actually within the Mirani electorate and I am not so much as mentioned. These are things that I could look into further in my time as the member for Mirani.

I think the estimates process needs to be looked at. However flawed, I do commend many of the outcomes and the distribution of funding in the Queensland government 2018-19 budget that have been announced for the electorate of Mirani and throughout Queensland. The estimates report—and I thank the committee members and the secretariat for their work—did find many positive initiatives that will benefit regional Queensland, in particular the funding for Queensland rural fire brigade volunteers, who do vital work for their communities. There is also exceptional room for improvement when it comes to delivering better outcomes for regional Queensland—in particular, for growers, for agricultural industries and for small businesses. I would also like to say that the QPS, the rural fire brigade and the urban fire brigade did an outstanding job with the number of fires that were lit in the Mount Morgan region recently. It was great—well, it was not good that they had to go through that, but they did attend those fires, sorted it out and caught the perpetrator, which was great.

Recently I visited the Capricornia Correctional Centre, which is currently running at 136 per cent occupancy. When I had a look through all the different cells, I found that the prison is extremely crowded and really needs attention. I am glad that the government is looking into that.

It is clear that more can be done to deliver better outcomes for the regions when it comes to infrastructure, investment planning and jobs for these areas, boosting local businesses and agriculture. Building our Regions changed ahead of the estimates hearing. I am on the ground in my electorate and

these issues arise continually. We heard about Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Works for Queensland initiatives for these areas. Although these employment prospects are short-term projects, we should be looking deeper into long-term projects and investments, and skilling and training more apprentices and trainees. Again, more can be done.

In regard to energy, there is \$1.24 billion in profits and we still do not have a clear determination on how we are going to lower electricity prices for consumers.

In the 2018-19 service area highlights, the DNRME states that it will create new public owned clean energy generation companies with a portfolio of low-emissions power generation assets. I will be looking forward to hearing more of how this will advance to lower power prices for consumers. I commend the estimates report to the House.