



Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

---

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.03 pm): I rise to speak to the estimates report of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. I note that a number of my colleagues have started their contribution by saying that it is a budget of higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure, and that is completely correct.

Apart from the sheer budgetary implications, we saw some astonishing revelations during the estimates process this year. I was very fortunate to sit next to my colleague the member for Toowoomba South when he had the opportunity to ask questions of the chairman of the CCC and what we saw was probably unprecedented in Queensland parliament—that is, to see the chairman of the CCC talking about how a senior minister in this government who is under assessment for allegations of wrongdoing called the chairman of the CCC on a weekend on his private mobile phone to discuss things. That, if I am correct, would be unacceptable if you are a councillor. If you tried something like that you would probably find yourself before the tribunal, but we have the Deputy Premier of our state doing these sorts of things.

The Deputy Premier has been accused of some very serious matters to do with conflicts of interest, yet she, unlike most Queenslanders who do not have the mobile number for Mr MacSporran in their phone, was able to ring Mr MacSporran and have a discussion, the account of which came from both her and from Mr MacSporran. We did see that the Deputy Premier made some file notes to account for her conversation. We have only her word that those file notes were not produced with the purpose of providing her pre-emptively with an excuse for what she had done. That aside, I think the chairman's description of her conduct as being 'unwise' puts it very mildly indeed.

I heard the Attorney-General say that she was proud to be speaking about the budget, implying that we should not be speaking about other matters. I might speak about the person whose responsibility it is to deliver that budget and to manage the financial affairs of Queensland. Some of these revelations go right to the core of that person's fitness for office and I think it reflects very poorly on the Labor government that the Treasurer still sits on the benches in the House during these proceedings with no sanction on her so far in spite of what appears to be very flagrant breaches of the ministerial code of conduct.

We also saw the Public Guardian matter. Earlier I heard the Attorney-General say that it was a matter of standing orders but that just does not wash, because I was there and I could see the flurry of notes, text messages and post-it notes backwards and forwards to the Public Guardian. I could see

there was a conga line of apparatchiks going backwards and forwards in between the time when my good friend the member for Toowoomba South asked to be able to bring her to the table when the Attorney-General first refused to the time when she was eventually allowed to come forward.

We do not know what the content or the basis of that exchange was—it is left to our imaginations—but it was very instructive that when the Public Guardian did come to the table I thought that her performance demonstrated that she was particularly concerned about how she should speak. I noticed a number of pauses and I felt awfully sorry for her, I might say, because of the grave matters that she was having to talk about in the presence of the Attorney-General. One can only speculate what the relationship between the Public Guardian and the government is at the moment because the Public Guardian has not made the government's life easy with her work, but I think that speaks volumes about her usefulness and her value as an officer in the service of the people of Queensland.

Turning to corrective services, I asked a question of the commissioner but, as is typical at these hearings, the police minister wanted to jump in and answer the question for the Police Commissioner. I quite enjoy the answers given by a sworn officer of the police force because they are direct and informative and I as deputy chair had to make representations to the chairman to force the minister to desist and allow the commissioner to speak for herself. One might wonder why. With only five minutes to speak about this report it is impossible to go through all of the matters that concern me, but I am not impressed by the performance of this government in estimates.

*(Time expired)*