



Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee, Report

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts) (2.05 pm): I would like to begin by thanking the committee including the chair, the member for Stretton, for their contributions during the estimates hearing and all of those involved. I would also like to acknowledge all of the staff from my Department of Environment and Science and from our statutory bodies who put in a great deal of work to ensure that they were ready for the questions that were posed during the estimates hearing.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting our environment, supporting science and continuing our support for the arts sector. We have a plan to support a state that is more sustainable and to take action to protect our environment and the Great Barrier Reef. Questions at estimates hearings are an important opportunity for the opposition to contribute to budget deliberations about some of the most significant issues facing Queensland. What I found most insightful was the questions that members of the LNP did not ask.

For instance, while Queensland farmers, tourism operators and businesses start to feel the effects of climate change, the LNP did not ask me a single question on that topic during our hearing. While those opposite want to bury their heads in the sand when it comes to our changing climate, the Palaszczuk government recognises that we are ultimately the last generation to be able to do something about it. That is why we have set ambitious targets, including zero net emissions by 2050 and 50 per cent renewables by 2030. We know that climate change and water quality are the biggest threats to the Great Barrier Reef, and we are continuing to protect the reef with record funding of \$330 million over five years. Protecting the reef, and the 60,000 jobs that rely on it, is one of our government's Advancing Queensland priorities and we are accelerating our work on improving water quality and tackling ongoing issues like the crown-of-thorns starfish.

It is a privilege and a responsibility that we have the world's largest coral reef system on our doorstep, so did members opposite ask me a question about the reef? No. Not one. Yesterday morning, the federal LNP's environment minister said that the federal government and Queensland are partners in protecting the Great Barrier Reef, so it is of course disappointing that the Queensland LNP do not feel the same level of responsibility.

Another area where our government is making real improvements is in waste management. Queenslanders are fighting a war on waste and, unfortunately, as has been pointed out several times, we have one of the worst recycling rates in the country. That is why we have developed and released

a new waste management and resource recovery strategy underpinned by the reintroduction of a waste levy. What we need to see is the Queensland LNP join their federal colleagues in understanding the importance of waste levies as a market signal. Instead, it is more chaos and division from those opposite.

There are many other areas in the environment space where we are continuing our government's important work, including in koala rehabilitation, fire management and improving national parks. We are also continuing our support for science, because after all science is in our everyday lives. Disappointingly, this was yet another topic that LNP members failed to ask a single question about during our hearing. That lack of interest demonstrates the contempt that those opposite have for science in Queensland. The Palaszczuk government backs science and we will continue to advocate for our scientists and the important work they do.

We had a dedicated time slot for science questions during our hearing, but not one question was asked specifically about science. We know that all they care about is attacking science for political purposes with their plans to create an office of science quality assurance. This office of alternative facts would be used to undermine science in the state, and that is a serious concern.

Our government respects the work of scientists, we invest in scientific research—peer reviewed scientific research—and we also invest in the arts. The arts and cultural sector delivers social and economic outcomes for Queenslanders, and our government is leading the way in delivering and supporting programs that engage with audiences right across the state and tell our important stories. This government has a plan for Queensland: to help protect our environment and support important sectors like science and the arts. We are building a state that is more sustainable and supporting a Queensland that continues to prosper.

In closing, once again I thank the committee, the chair and all those involved in ensuring that this estimates hearing was able to proceed.