



Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (3.50 pm): What an honour it was to participate in the estimates process this year, having missed last year due to back surgery. The questions that were asked by the LNP showed that they do no research at all. What a wasted opportunity. Their statement of reservation is as pathetic as it is predictable. Is it any wonder the people of Queensland overwhelmingly rejected the member for Nanango when choosing a Queensland premier.

When it comes to investing in water infrastructure, our government has an outstanding record. With \$1.9 billion of investment in water infrastructure and the 2,300 jobs it has supported since 2015, it is obvious that the Palaszczuk government is pro infrastructure and pro regions.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: You have not been to Rookwood Weir, have you?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Pause the clock. Put your comments through the chair, please.

Mr BUTCHER: Accusations to the contrary are a bit rich coming from those opposite. They did not build anything. Despite having an opportunity to ask legitimate questions, the member for Nanango used estimates to have a crack at me personally, and she has backed it up again today. She wasted everyone's time in that committee by baselessly accusing me of rorts because the Gladstone Area Water Board spent money in the Callide electorate. Firstly, it should come as a shock to no-one that the Gladstone Area Water Board spends money in the Gladstone region and, as we have heard today, in the Callide region as well. That is what it was established to do. I do not approve funding for the projects delivered by the Gladstone Area Water Board. That is the responsibility of their board, and their expenditure is also externally reviewed by the QCA. If the member knew her shadow portfolio area she would have known that, but obviously she did not.

There is one issue I will never shy away from, and that is the safety and wellbeing of Queenslanders, unlike those opposite. What the estimates confirmed is that the LNP and the member for Nanango do not care about the personal safety of Queenslanders living downstream of Paradise Dam. We put safety first and listened to—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The minister is misleading the House and I ask him to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you taking personal offence?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I do take personal offence.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Nanango has taken personal offence. Minister, do you withdraw?

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw. We put safety first and we listened to expert advice, but who needs experts when you have got the LNP? Time and time again, they have confirmed they would have left the dam as it was, putting thousands of lives at risk. To help the member understand, I brought part of the concrete wall in to demonstrate exactly what that danger was, but she would not even look at it. It was like kryptonite to her. She did not want to look at it; she did not want to go near it. I have been out to that dam multiple times. I have spoken with irrigators, locals, the mayor, the local member, businesses and advocacy groups. I did not go to a hairdresser or get a picture buying a bottle of rum. I know how the people feel in that region and that is why we as a government are focused on the solution.

Unlike those opposite, I am not interested in stirring up trouble and trying to divide a community. People want politicians who give them hope, especially after what we have been through with COVID-19. They do not want any more anger in that community and they do not want any more division. It gets Queensland nowhere and it certainly gets the LNP nowhere.

It is a privilege to get out and meet Queenslanders every week in all corners of the state as the Minister for Regional Development. The most important part of this job is taking this information and working with responsible ministers to continue to deliver for regional Queenslanders. It is not surprising that the LNP do not understand this concept, given their total fear of consultation with anyone. With people moving to the regions in droves, it is the Palaszczuk government that they can certainly trust to deliver for regional Queensland. It is our government that makes sure that Queensland's COVID economic recovery plan is providing jobs, opportunities and benefits for regional Queenslanders.

What a contrast we saw in the member for Nanango's constant reckless antics, when she and her colleagues called for the borders to be opened 64 times. It would have been hard to have an economic recovery with mine sites closed, tourist parks shut and manufacturing facilities and logistics networks grinding to a halt. I also will not be lectured by those opposite on our government's outstanding support to Queensland manufacturers. When the LNP were briefly in government, 14,700 jobs were lost in the industry. That is not a plan; that is a disaster. I thank the Labor members of the committee for their proper questions during estimates. The LNP members, especially the member for Nanango, could learn something from them.