



Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation (Parliament) Bill**

#### **Economics and Governance Committee, Report**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.54 am): I report to the House that the committee recommends that the proposed expenditure for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service, as detailed in the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2021, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. This committee values the role we have in maintaining our House and maintaining the place that we have. I once heard the member for Kawana describe it as Queensland's 'premier heritage house' and we have to continue to think of it as that.

I thank the Speaker and the Clerk, who appeared before us. I also note that the members for Maiwar and Kawana joined the committee members: the erstwhile, combative member for Mermaid Beach and the members for Coomera, Macalister, Ninderry and Hervey Bay, who all took their responsibilities seriously.

I note that the inquiry looked at what we are doing for the House in terms of extensive repairs, especially the major refurbishment of the Parliamentary Annexe. It is important that these steps are taken with the support of both sides of parliament. In that way, there was a productive value to it. There was one comment in the report's statement of reservation that I found really disappointing. It states—

In this estimates process, Queenslanders expected the Labor Government to be honest and accountable. It is our view that instead, Labor Committee Chairs used the Standing Orders to protect Labor Ministers

The Speaker made extensive commentary on the process of the committees. He called upon us all to take out the theatre and to focus on the scrutiny process. He was right but, unfortunately, throughout the estimates process we saw from those opposite multiple attempts at amateur theatre, grandstanding and acting up, just to get their faces on the nightly news. I have been advised that during a number of hearings those opposite continued to interrupt and speak over witnesses and, indeed, spoke over the chairperson. I know this happened to me on a number of occasions. This is deeply disappointing and deeply disrespectful to the process of parliament.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** I note that the members of the committee did have respect for that process, and I admire them for that. Unfortunately, that was not the case for some of our invited guests. During the Health and Environment Committee hearing the member for Mudgeeraba and her colleagues

interrupted the chair 62 times. That is nearly as many times as they called for our borders to be opened, which would have damaged the health of Queensland even more! The non-government members of this chamber—

**Mr Stevens:** Relevance to this committee?

**Mr POWER:** It is relevant to the Speaker, who spoke to the estimates process. That is what I am addressing. It is vital that the Speaker gave us guidance on the entire estimates process, and I am reflecting on what was in that report.

Non-government members of this chamber have claimed that they need more time to ask questions. Unfortunately, the statistics are against them. I am advised that overall throughout the estimates hearings 39 per cent of the time was used for government members' questions. Of course, this means that 61 per cent of the time was 'utilised' by non-government members to ask questions.

I am further advised that, of the total number of questions asked during estimates hearings, 29 per cent were asked by government members and 71 per cent were asked by non-government members. Approximately 737 questions were asked by non-government members and only 294 questions were asked by government members. Comparing this to the Newman government, I am advised that, in 2013, 45 per cent of questions were asked by government members and 55 per cent were asked by non-government members. These statistics show a dramatic increase in the time given to opposition and non-government members during the estimates process under the Palaszczuk government.

I note that we have done this through our process. I cannot be responsible for opposition members failing to put questions that actually matter. During this period of COVID, it is so vital that we reflect on the role of government. We have to be nimble, accurate and find new and innovative ways to help Queenslanders. The amateur theatrics, the shameful behaviour and the interruptions by members of the opposition were a disservice to the estimates process and a disservice to this House.