



Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

Health and Environment Committee, Report

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to make a very short contribution with respect to the estimates process, particularly with reference to the Health and Environment Committee. On reflecting on the estimates process and preparing to rise in the House today, I have to say that it all seems like a bit of a blur because it was all so quick. Sadly, 2020 was a year that many of us would like to forget. It was a tragedy in many respects, but the great tragedy was the financial mismanagement of those on the other side of the House. We saw all sorts of promises made during the lead-up to the election. We saw the election cycle come and go. Sadly, we saw those on the other side re-elected. Then we were exposed to two very quick weeks back in parliament and then a very truncated estimates process.

The theme was very much 'You can trust us,' in spite of the fact that all sorts of promises made prior to the election were blown by the budget delivered by the Treasurer. We were told, 'Golly gosh! Gee whillikers! We said there might be a \$5 billion blowout because of COVID and the challenges of 2020, but we're going to have to borrow another \$28 billion.' I have to say that in the short time this government has been re-elected Queenslanders do not have a lot of confidence in those on the other side of the House and nor should they. We have seen the Health 2020 report from the Queensland Audit Office, and what do we read in that report? We read about the fact that waitlists have gone up again. Yes, I know that everybody will want to hide behind the fact that it was COVID, but the fact is—

Mr Harper: It's not hiding. It's actual fact. No-one is hiding anything.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. COVID was a fact, but it should not be an excuse for not treating people who are chronically ill. We had an eight per cent increase in wages and salaries last year through the health system to the year ended June 2020—that is just for the first six months, by the way—but a seven per cent decrease in the number of Queenslanders receiving important, urgent or essential surgery. That is a disgrace. That is inexcusable. In the Auditor-General's report we also read that 11 out of 16 health services reported operating losses. What confidence can we have in the estimates process when it is all rushed through? The Treasurer and health minister come along and say, 'Nothing to see here. Everything is going to be fine.' But for the previous 12 months, as we hear from the Audit Office, 11 out of 16 health services had already blown their budget for the previous year, and now we are asked to trust them to make sure that the budget is going to be 'just fine' this year.

What else do we hear from the Auditor-General's office? In the report into the implementation of the financial supply chain management system we hear about more IT failures by this government. For a system that should have cost \$135 million to install, already costs have blown out by \$30 million. The implementation was delayed by some six or seven months, I believe, and at the time over \$540 million of vendor invoices were paid late. That means that Queensland businesses were not being paid on time and not being looked after. We heard from the Minister for Small Business today, who tried to tell us what a great job she is going to do and how much she cares about small business. That \$540 million is a large sum and it is hard to comprehend, but that represents 32,359 separate invoices. As at the end of October there were still almost 9,000 invoices not paid and well overdue. I do not have a lot of confidence in this government's ability to deliver on its promises, and that is without even looking at things like the capital works statement. What a disgrace!

Southport and the Gold Coast, the areas I am very proud to represent, represent 14 per cent of the state's population, but how much is in the capital works budget for the Gold Coast? Less than three per cent, and there is very little for health services. It talks about some sort of outlier or regional type health centres, which is a nice, innovative idea, but we are expecting the population of Townsville to move to the Gold Coast by—

(Time expired)