




Speech By
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COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.44 pm): We have here a statistical report that talks about numbers and is a bit of a tick-and-flick process that says, ‘Oh yeah, everything is running fine.’ I want to step back. What is the estimates process for? To make sure that the executive that runs Queensland is held accountable for how it spends taxpayers’ money and for how it is acting on their behalf. They have the right to do that because they have the majority in this House. Others in this House also have the right to make sure that they are held accountable for that in an open and transparent way.

We all agree that the estimates process has become a bit of a tick and flick and that there is a bit of a gotcha moment that people are looking for when, in fact, ministers come in with pre-prepared statements and a whole bunch of prepared questions and answers that send the gallery and the rest of Queensland to sleep. We come in to try to dig and scrape at a little bit of information that might be useful to make sure that the government is acting properly on behalf of the taxpayers of Queensland. When we talk to the general public, they are not interested in who had 30 seconds more than someone else; they are interested in a genuine process of question and answer so that they can understand what the executive is doing on their behalf with their money. It is long overdue that this process was overhauled. I am not being partisan.

This process needs to be overhauled for the good governance of Queensland. It needs to be overhauled so that the executive is held accountable and so that it is not some sort of media stunt where the latest policy is promoted. It is an opportunity for the people of Queensland to analyse and understand whether the money that they have paid in taxes and other forms of revenue—and the policies that they were told the government would execute—are being followed. Anyone in this place who disagrees with that principle—that the people of Queensland deserve some truth and honesty from the government and some evidence that the policies they took to an election on which they were elected are being followed in an open and transparent way—should really get out and talk to the general public.

Regarding the statistical nature of number collecting, the chair of my committee, the member for Kurwongbah, was very fair and we did get an opportunity. We did not get an opportunity to really dig into some issues because the time—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Order! Member for Kawana, member for Chatsworth, order!

Mr WATTS: The time is still limited. Yes, the member allocated the time in an overfair way to the opposition. This parliament set a time limit in the first place. We heard from the member for Miller that questions were not asked by other members. There are 93 members in here. If the shadow minister asks some questions and everybody else wants to ask a question, we only have four hours of which 15 or 20 minutes is taken up with a ministerial statement so everybody is euthanised—sorry, anaesthetised

in the process—I think they might like to kill us off but they won't get that opportunity! They try to send everybody to sleep so that nobody is paying attention to any questions being asked. To limit the time really devalues the voices of everybody in Queensland. This government should increase the time for every analysis. They say, 'Oh, you didn't get enough questions.' We should just keep going until the questions have finished.

The government should answer every question that a member of this House has about where taxpayers' money has gone and about the good governance of Queensland, because then this House is truly getting on with the job of governing Queensland. This government is not doing that. It is secretive, it is hiding things and it is trying to make sure the people of Queensland do not find out the truth because it is very afraid of the truth coming out.