




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2022

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.40 pm): I rise to address report No. 32 of the Committee of the Legislative Assembly titled *Report on the 2022 budget estimates process*. To be blunt, it is a pretty vanilla report.

Mr Power: Pardon?

Mr POWELL: It is a vanilla report. It is not offensive, there is not a lot in it. I am sorry, Deputy Clerk. I have offended, have I? I apologise for that.

As the member for Capalaba said, there are a lot of numbers here. In essence, it provides the quantitative analysis in tabular and graphical form of what occurred in this year's budget process and compares that with previous budgets. As I was always taught during my science degree, it is important to look at not only quantitative analysis but also qualitative analysis. If we stuck to just the quantitative analysis and referred to some of the comments the member for Capalaba just made, then we would note that in the estimates hearings that we often hear those opposite go on and on and on about—the 2014 estimates hearings—those opposite got more time than any opposition had to question a government of the day. They whinge and whinge, yet according to this report it is quite glaringly clear that they never had it better than in that system in 2014.

Therefore, let me look at the qualitative analysis of what occurred at the estimates. We heard the member for Capalaba say that the opposition behaved themselves this year. It is fair to say that some of the chairs behaved themselves a bit more this year too, but that did not stop a high-level protection racket continuing, it did not prevent lines of questioning being interrupted and it did not stop arbitrary time limits being put on that meant that if shadow ministers had a line of questioning it was not pulled up. I think we need to go to the heart of what is going on here, and I refer to some comments from the Clerk himself during our estimates hearing about our committee process. Members have to remember that back in 2011 there was a review of our parliamentary committees and there were two aspects to that. The first was around how we review legislation, and the Clerk said—

I think the legislative process has improved dramatically as a result of the parliamentary committee system—

The second part was around ensuring that the government is accountable, that the government is held to account. The Clerk mentioned that that aspect in particular still has some way to go. The proposal from the Clerk is that we desperately need to review our committee system. He made some comments specifically about the estimates process. He said—

I do not think ... the estimates process that we are having is working as well as what was envisaged it would in 2011 and in some respects the system that was in place prior to 2011 may in fact be better because things may have gotten even worse in terms of the overall estimates process.

Whilst this report can say what it says, underlying that is the fact that the Clerk himself is saying that potentially our estimates processes have gotten worse than they were before the committee system was reviewed. The Clerk mentioned that potentially this was something the Committee of the Legislative

Assembly could look at. The LNP opposition have put on the table a number of ways that we think the estimates process could be reviewed. We did that back in December 2020, but we have not heard anything from the government. There has been no discussion to my knowledge at the CLA.

The Leader of the House has the opportunity to bring forward these kinds of improvements, to have that conversation, to even call for a review of our committee process, as the Clerk has called for. When the Leader of the House cannot even issue a parliamentary sitting calendar for a subsequent year and it is 1 December—she cannot get the simple things right—obviously calling for a review into the committee process is a lot more complex. I note that the Leader of the House is also the Minister for Health and cannot seem to run hospitals, cannot ensure that ambulance ramping is not occurring, cannot ensure there are no doctors undertaking malpractice in our hospitals and cannot ensure that patients are kept safe. What we clearly have in the Leader of the House is an inability to do anything, to fix anything, to put forward any proposals—whether it be our committee process, our estimates hearings, the parliamentary sitting calendar or the department that she is responsible for.

It is one thing to discuss a report that presents quantitative analysis of an estimates hearing; it is another to drill down and look at the process and realise it is broken and in need of repair. The LNP are ready to repair it.