



Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.08 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the 2022-23 budget estimates report from the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. The LNP has expressed its concerns about the estimates process, with the committee chairs running protection rackets for ministers. It was the former Labor Speaker of the Legislative Assembly John Mickel who once called the estimates process a protection racket. He was not wrong, and this year it was no different.

Turning to the issues raised in the hearing, councils have called for the Works for Queensland program to be raised to \$100 million per year. Councils have been short-changed by this government's wasteful spending. The LNP exposed during the estimates process that more than \$3 billion of taxpayers' money has been wasted. This included over \$220 million on a mothballed quarantine facility. If the Queensland government had not built the 'Wastecamp' whilst playing politics with the former federal government, councils may well have their \$100 million per year for Works for Queensland.

The Deputy Premier again failed to rule out stopping the proposed boundary realignment process between the Rockhampton and Livingstone councils. The boundary proposals should only proceed when both councils agree. The Deputy Premier and his predecessor ignored this point. The recent change commission survey proved how incensed the residents of the Livingstone Shire Council are with this proposal. Ninety-five per cent of the Livingstone shire residents who responded did not support the proposal, leading to 54 per cent of all respondents voting against the boundary change. This is no surprise. The government's own report said the proposed change would result in only a marginal benefit for Rockhampton residents yet a significant rate rise for those Livingstone residents. The councils do not agree, the residents do not agree and future financial sustainability is not assured. It is disappointing that the Deputy Premier is allowing this to drag on, but even more disappointing is the silence from the local member for Keppel. Her constituents are facing rates hikes of up to \$250 in the middle of a full-blown cost-of-living crisis and she is silent. The member for Keppel needs to take a stand on behalf of the people in her electorate because so far she has completely let them down.

The Deputy Premier also failed to rule out changing the voting system for the Brisbane City Council elections in March 2024. The Brisbane Labor council opposition cannot come up with policies that people want so they rely on their state Labor colleagues to change the voting system for their political advantage. Local government stakeholders are against the rigging of the local government

voting system, as are the LNP. Such a move only stands to benefit two groups: Labor and the Greens. I say to those backbenchers and those ministers in the House, think long and hard about where your government is going with this. In the last term local governments resoundingly rejected the rigging of the voting system. However, given Labor's shameful record in tipping the electoral scales in their favour, I suspect we will have a two-minutes-to-midnight, sneaky electoral change.

Ms Pease interjected.

Ms LEAHY: Eighteen minutes notice! Finally, the state Labor government needs to stop dragging its feet on the Resilient Homes Fund. Constituents are suffering in unlivable conditions following the floods earlier this year and still the money is not getting out the door. The public works minister confirmed in a later hearing that less than three quarters of the assessments are underway. Only one of the three companies invited to do the assessments accepted the work and people will be waiting until next year for their funding. People's homes are uninhabitable now. They are going through the stress of what it is like after a natural disaster. The state and the federal governments need to accelerate this program. Overall, I would have to say I agree with one statement the Treasurer made during budget week: that this is, indeed, a typical Labor budget. It is a budget of broken promises, failed service delivery, increased taxes and complete indifference towards local government. Councils across Queensland deserve better and Queenslanders deserve better.