



Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise to speak on the estimates report for the Economics and Governance Committee. I congratulate the Premier, the ministers and the Speaker, as well as committee members from all sides. In particular, I acknowledge the chair, the member for Logan, for the way that he ran the show. The Economics and Governance Committee heard from the Speaker, the Premier, the Treasurer, and the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement.

As the assistant minister to the Premier for veterans' affairs, I was particularly pleased to hear from the Premier regarding that portfolio. We are continuing to roll out our commitment of \$10 million in funding over four years to provide additional support to veterans, their families and ex-service organisations. This funding will ensure that support is provided to those who have served our country. It includes \$3 million for capital works and community projects that enhance recognition for our veterans, known as the Queensland Remembers Grants Program. There is over \$1 million for up to 300 traineeships and apprenticeships and enhancements to the Queensland Veterans' Portal and Veterans' Employment Pathway. I was really pleased to hear the Premier speak about the case study of someone who has gone through that trainee and apprenticeship program. It really is a useful one. It is a really great collaboration that we have with TAFE Queensland. There is over \$1 million for employment services through The Oasis in Townsville and \$1 million to assist ex-service organisations in managing the impacts of COVID-19, just to name a few.

We are getting on with the job of delivering the new Queensland Veterans' Council, which is a statutory body responsible for providing advice to the Queensland government on veterans matters and managing Anzac Square, the state war memorial and the Anzac Day Trust fund. Applications opened for the Veterans' Council and the Veterans' Reference Group, which will support it, in April and closed in May this year. Numerous applications were received for those two esteemed bodies.

We are also investing in training, apprenticeships and employment services, including for 52 Queenslanders who are currently enrolled in the Defence to Civilian Success Training Program, which provides free TAFE and apprenticeships. Of course, that is on top of our Veterans' Employment Pathway program, which has assisted more than 1,000 veterans to start new careers within the Queensland Public Service since July 2018, including over 300 veterans who have secured employment in the past financial year alone.

I turn to the committee itself and its conduct. Integrity pursuits were shown up to be the joke they were. We were chasing laptops and conspiracy theories instead of actually examining the budget. During the estimates hearing we heard disgraceful accusations that public servants were former Labor staffers when it is quite clear, and was demonstrated in the committee, that they are not. We saw a continuation of how those opposite treat the Public Service and the lack of respect they have for government employees. It was pretty much a re-run of last year and the year before in terms of chasing the grab rather than having a proper examination of the budget.

We have heard many of those opposite in their addresses about the process today, as well as in the estimates hearing itself, banging on about Wellcamp, but of course they are completely quiet about the Pinkenba facility planned under the former prime minister and minister for about 10 other things. If he had given himself the additional role of minister for quarantine maybe it would have been started a bit earlier. There has been \$410 million spent on the unused Pinkenba facility and \$21 million spent on the COVIDSafe app, but all the opposition care about is a conspiracy theory relating to a laptop here in Queensland.

I am proud of how we run our estimates process where the minister of the day is questioned by the opposition. Of course, unlike the approach of LNP governments, we tell the public who our ministers are. Can members imagine the estimates process if we ran our government like the Morrison government? We would not know which secret minister would show up on any given day. It is a bit hard to hold the minister of the day to account when you do not know who the minister is. I am sure there is more to come out of this story but when Malcolm Turnbull says it is one of the most appalling things he has ever heard then we know it is bad—and that is from the bloke who did utegate. Recently, former home affairs minister Karen Andrews called on the former prime minister to resign. That is what you get when you have an LNP government at a federal or state level: a complete trashing of democratic processes and a complete trashing of transparency, which is in stark contrast to what we see in our Queensland estimates process.

This is a great budget for Queensland for now and for setting us up for the future. It is a budget that is supported by this parliament, including those opposite. It is about good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle.