



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.41 pm): I start by thanking the minister and his staff for providing very fulsome and comprehensive answers to all of the worthwhile questions asked during estimates. Estimates is very much a source of important information to us all here, especially those answers to questions from government members. I always draw people's attention to those answers. For example, during our estimates hearing we learned about the Resilient Homes Fund. I think this is an incredible achievement of the Palaszczuk government. I congratulate the government, the Premier and the Deputy Premier on it.

During estimates we learned that there were 4,200 expressions of interest: 427 are looking for buyback; 667 are unsure of their options, 1,500 are looking for a refit; and 1,200 are looking for house raising. There were 8,600 initial assessments and 3,100 inspections. That is an incredible amount of work in such a short amount of time in terms of this wonderful initiative. Today we heard an update—\$220 million expended already and 90 houses approved for buyback.

I thank the Deputy Premier for acknowledging the role that Major Street, Deception Bay played in generating this particular initiative. The Deputy Premier noted that when he saw what was happening in Major Street it helped convince him of the need for this fund. I went through that process in 2015, seeing what Major Street residents had been through. For many years since I have been exploring our options for buyback and retrofit. Once again, estimates was a great opportunity to learn about what we can do through this Palaszczuk government.

I want to quickly talk about what the Leader of the Opposition thinks estimates needs. I note that there were a couple of things he did not highlight when talking about his ideas of reform. My question to him is: how will he reform what the opposition does? What will he do about the poor quality of opposition questions? We have seen it. Each year we as chairs remind them to stick to the standing orders—it is easy—yet each year they keep throwing out imputations, inferences, arguments and hypotheticals. They know the drill: 'It breaches standing order 115. Recast your question.' Each year we rule out such questions or ask opposition members to recast their questions. They keep doing it. I do not think it is poor planning. This is what they want. They want the drama to be played out on the news. They do not want expenditure examined; they want a drama to feature on the news. This is what members of the opposition never talk about when discussing how they would reform estimates—how

they attempt to turn it into a circus each year. What a shame. They talk about their solutions. They do not want solutions or answers; all they want is to get a grab on the news. They do not want to put the government under scrutiny; they want to turn estimates into a circus.

The opposition leader now has an opportunity to do what he can to reform estimates. He should reform what opposition members and their advisers do each year. We have heard the Treasurer say it many times: if you want decent answers, ask decent questions.

I highlight what we learned about biosecurity this year. I congratulate the minister for agriculture. Some \$200 million has been expended on biosecurity this year. We heard about the preparedness to deal with foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease. It is very clear that we do not have it now but we are very prepared. There are exercises being conducted and we are prepared. In terms of fire ants, it was really good to hear how we are part of a national strategy to counter and repress fire ants when they pop up. That includes surveillance teams and sniffer dogs.

This is an historic day in this parliament. I finish by acknowledging a special guest in the gallery, Professor Kay Saunders AO, who has been an incredible person in terms of highlighting over the years the need for a treaty.