



Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.46 pm): I rise to speak to the state development committee report on budget estimates. I say to the honourable member for Bancroft that I do not think there is anything wrong with the questions; it is more about the answers and the fact that government members continue to run a protection racket for incompetent ministers. I will not be lectured to by the member for Bancroft about circuses. This is a fellow who walks around this place in a three-piece suit in his own circus!

Mr WHITING: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker—

Mr BLEIJIE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I think he is taking offence!

Mr WHITING: I take offence and I desire the member to withdraw that comment.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. When the chair of the committee talks about recasting questions, it is just because he does not want the minister to answer. It is the cover-up of incompetent ministers. In this estimates process, in my first question I asked whether the director-general was aware of any self-confessed vote rorters working in his department. He said, 'No.' He only had to look in the mirror! This is a director-general who is a self-confessed vote rorter. This estimates hearing for state development was always destined to be a bit dodgy. Members opposite say that we are attacking public servants. I am not; I am attacking Mike Kaiser, the director-general, because he is a self-confessed vote rorter, pursuant to a report in Queensland.

Then we go to the Deputy Premier, who tried to take the high moral ground that at estimates he was always going to tell everyone the Wellcamp costs. For 12 months he refused to answer any questions about the cost of Wellcamp. He said, 'No, it's commercial-in-confidence. I'd be breaching the deal with the Wagner family. We absolutely cannot tell anyone what Wellcamp is costing.' All of a sudden, on budget estimates day—incidentally, the day after the Acting Auditor-General confirms an investigation is launched into the Wellcamp facility—the Deputy Premier said, 'We can advise how much Wellcamp cost. I always intended to talk about this at estimates.' That is absolute baloney—absolute rubbish. He never did. He was only forced into it because the Acting Auditor-General 24 hours prior said that there was an investigation on foot.

Over \$220 million was absolutely wasted on the Wellcamp facility. Now it is sitting there vacant. The government does not want to use it for all the homeless people in our communities. They do not want to use it for DV victims. They do not want to use it for flood victims. They said they were going to

use it for cruise ship passengers with COVID yet they have to drive past the Pinkenba facility which is next to the cruise ship terminal. They have to get on a bus and drive an hour and a half out to Toowoomba to use the facility there when they have to go past a quarantine facility next to the cruise ship terminal. It is like they came up with every excuse not to use it for quarantine because it never was. Around 700 people used it. The government could have bought a unit for every person who went into this quarantine facility. They could have given them a house to quarantine in on their own. That is how much money they wasted. Will they extend the lease? The lease expires in April. They have a 12-month extension of the lease. Are they going to extend the lease? I have no idea. What an absolute waste of Queensland taxpayers' money by the Deputy Premier.

Everywhere we go across Queensland, do members know what people are talking about? They are talking about Wellcamp. They are talking about 'Wastecamp'. They are talking about 'Wellness Camp'. They are talking about Wellcamp, 'Wellness Camp' and 'Wastecamp'. This will be one of the biggest public failures of the Labor Party we have seen since the health payroll debacle. This is at the feet of the Deputy Premier. He is to blame for this quarantine facility at Wellcamp—no-one else.

He talks about the resilience package and flood victims. The money has only started rolling out in the last 48 hours because Channel 9 did a story on Friday last week about them refusing to talk to home owners. Tanya, who Channel 9 featured in the story, all of sudden got a phone call from the minister's department saying, 'We will sort it out for you.' It is after the actions of the media that this government acts and not beforehand.

I had a constituent of mine, Ian, come in to my electorate office the other day and he said that he wanted to meet with the Deputy Premier to talk about taxpayer money wasted on Wellcamp. He asked me to give a gift to the Deputy Premier. This is the gift he wants to give to the Deputy Premier. It is a wellness white elephant.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you are not able to use that as a prop in the House.

Mr BLEIJIE: And I am not going to table it either, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I figured that.

Mr BLEIJIE: My constituent wants to know how he can gift it to the Deputy Premier. Noting the Deputy Premier is in the chamber today, I say to the Deputy Premier that if wants to meet me out the back I would happily hand this white elephant to him on behalf of my constituent. That is the legacy of the Deputy Premier—an absolute debacle and bungle; the \$220 million white elephant at Wellcamp or, as we know it, 'Wastecamp'.