



Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (12.44 pm): I rise to make a small contribution in the debate on the estimates committee report. Firstly, I thank the committee members and the chair, the member for Kurwongbah. The member for Clayfield asked why we are praising him. We have the unfortunate situation of looking at other estimates hearings and seeing how some of those processes go and how the chairs interfere or committee members interfere in the asking of legitimate questions by the opposition. We saw that in the estimates process from the start. The member for Kurwongbah has respect for the process. Opposition members can ask questions of the government freely without other members of the committee interfering or being stopped.

That is important in this parliament. Given that we only have a lower house, it is important that we get the committee system working as effectively as we possibly can. It is important not just for this place but for all Queenslanders that we have an effective opposition and questions can be asked without being interrupted. Member for Kurwongbah, you do a sterling job, you are a good chair and I enjoy working with you.

Thank you to the member for Stretton and the member for Mundingburra for their involvement in the committee process. I thank the member for Toowoomba North. I give a shout-out to the member for Callide. One of his first official parliamentary duties was to sit in estimates from 8.30—our first meeting—to eight that night. I thank the member for Callide who is doing a sterling job. He will be a significant member in this place and a member for a long time. I enjoyed his first speech yesterday. I congratulate him on his maturity and on his ability to do his job. I look forward to working with him.

The budget is characterised by numerous shortcomings which have failed to meet the expectations of Queenslanders. Many of these shortcomings became increasingly evident during the estimates process. Cost blowouts and project delays continue to plague this government. What we want to know is the real cost of Cross River Rail. It continues to be commercial-in-confidence. The figure often quoted by the minister of \$5.4 billion clearly is not accurate, with the budget itself showing construction costs of at least \$6.88 billion. The government also refuses to come clean on the ancillary projects that have their own separate line items and are not part of the \$6.88 billion. Why does the minister not come clean and give us the true cost of Cross River Rail?

Every taxpayer dollar is precious, especially when there is a \$5.7 billion maintenance backlog and the government has failed to meet its performance targets for fatalities where the road condition was a contributing factor. The \$5.7 billion maintenance backlog has a huge impact in regional Queensland, especially where I come from. It has an impact not only on road safety but also on industries such as the cattle industry. In getting cattle to the processor or to the port cattle are losing condition on these roads. This is having a financial impact on the cattle industry. I call on the minister to please address the maintenance backlog, get the money out and fix these roads up.

When it comes to energy, we raised the issue about the IT program designed to manage purchasing and payroll for Energy Queensland which has blown out by at least \$181 million. The botched digital enterprise building blocks program has ballooned from \$633 million to \$814 million, proving again that this government is incapable of delivering projects on time and on budget. Why are we continuing to see blowouts and increased costs with this program? We found out about this issue from the ETU. They put out a media release. It was their own people who back them who are concerned about an IT program that continues to blow out. The minister is refusing to address this issue at the moment. He needs to rein this program in.

Finally, the Minister for Resources all but confirmed he was blindsided by the royalty hike and was not invited into the cabinet discussions about the royalty hike. You are the Minister for Resources. You hold one of the most important portfolios in this government.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Member for Gregory, I ask you to direct your comments to the chair. I also ask all members to refrain from shouting out. If you have a point order to raise, stand up, seek the call and make a point of order. I do not know who it was but please, members.

Mr MILLAR: Thank you for your direction, Mr Deputy Speaker. Resources are important. Please, Minister, address this issue.