



Speech By
Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.25 pm): As I speak, Queenslanders are suffering from the rising cost of living. They are struggling with housing and worrying about whether they can afford the rising cost of rent, electricity, food and petrol. While Queenslanders are making daily sacrifices to get by, estimates has revealed that the state government is wasting taxpayer money and blowing the budget with a litany of cost overruns and financial waste.

The Palaszczuk government wasted \$2 million on flashy pamphlets, ads and websites for the Tradies in Paradise campaign, a scheme that produced just two tradies. They approved \$2.7 million to be spent on a roller-coaster when it was intended to produce a world-class koala research facility. Meanwhile, the social housing they promised will take 25 years to deliver, and Queenslanders are still waiting for the electricity power rebate promise because the government actually forgot to tell energy retailers to provide it. Cross River Rail has blown out by \$8 billion. Then there is the biggest waste of all—Wellcamp.

Over \$220 million of taxpayer money was spent on this quarantine facility that we will never own and is not being used. Wellcamp? More like 'Wastecamp'. This was a trigger-happy decision that put politics above people. With \$220 million the government could have funded 870 social housing homes. When you total up the waste, it amounts to over \$3 billion of taxpayer money, all at a time when local businesses were fighting to keep their doors open during border lockdowns, when our community was inundated by floods, and while families had been struggling to keep a roof over their heads. This is \$3 billion that could have been used to give our community a handup. This government's inability to plan and deliver meaningful infrastructure and services is costing our community.

Then there is the integrity crisis ripping through this state government. Estimates added yet another sorry chapter to this Labor government's integrity crisis. The former deputy premier and treasurer Jackie Trad is fighting in court to keep a CCC report secret, and the government is using taxpayer money to pay for it. Questioning over estimates revealed that two indemnities have been provided to Jackie Trad, and it is the second that is so extraordinary—a special indemnity to pay for the legal assistance for Jackie Trad to fight to keep the CCC report secret.

Despite repeated questioning, the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice failed to provide the reasons for giving the second special indemnity and refused to tell Queenslanders how much it is costing them. The decision of the Attorney-General to provide the second indemnity and her

unwillingness to share the costs of this with Queensland taxpayers flies in the face of transparency and good government. It is extraordinary that the taxpayer is funding an action by Jackie Trad to keep a CCC report secret, but the decision of this government to hide those costs from the public is disgraceful.

As if that was not enough, estimates revealed that not only has the police minister broken his promise to get more police boots on the ground, with budget documents showing that the growth rate of sworn police officers has been less than one per cent per annum since Labor's election, but the police minister is not across his brief when it comes to our Coolangatta Police Station. We are suffering from the scourge of crime. We have witnessed community members brutally assaulted, homes broken into, family members held at knifepoint while their cars are stolen, and one family is lucky to be alive after surviving a shooting in Coolangatta.

Cross-border crime is on the rise. Criminals regularly flee across the border, which is why the Coolangatta Police Station is so important. However, when I asked this police minister to guarantee that the Coolangatta Police Station will be rebuilt in Coolangatta when the light rail goes through Coolangatta—and there are plans to resume the land of the Coolangatta Police Station—this incompetent police minister did not even know what I was talking about. He did not even know that there are plans to resume the land of the Coolangatta Police Station because of the light rail. He could not guarantee that a new one would be built.

Coolangatta deserves a police station. All we are asking is that this police minister is across his brief, that this police minister starts planning for the land that might be required in order to rebuild the police station when the land on which our Coolangatta Police Station stands is resumed for the light rail.

(Time expired)