



Speech By  
**Linus Power**


**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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## COMMITTEES

### Estimates Hearings

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.41 pm): When I was growing up, I used to see the duo of Senator Faulkner and Senator Ray carefully ask questions during their budget estimates in the federal government. They would carefully examine the budget piece by piece and drill into the detail. They did not have a big show to put on. They were not pontificating or trying to get a grab for the camera, but they got details for the Australian people. I thought that is what it would be like here.

I have probably spent more time in estimates than anyone else in this House since the Palaszczuk government has been in place, because I have actually stood in on quite a lot of other committees. I keep seeing that it is all about being a performer and excited for the cameras. For them, it is not about finding facts for Queenslanders and it is not about examining the details. In my time as chair, I have found that independent members ask far better questions. I also think it is important that the government gets to tell its story. I am not someone who wants to tear down good government. I do not want to be part of an estimates process when it is all attack and never about building our state, but that is what I seem to do.

I noticed that the member for Broadwater failed badly at the last estimates. We could feel the pressure. He had built himself up so big to go to estimates. However, he fell down so badly that he needed to justify himself so he immediately put an attack out saying it was not his failure but it was the system's failure. I read that with interest. He felt there should be probing questions asked of the ministers, and I wondered why he did not deliver them when he had the chance. He also felt there should be less time for government members to ask questions, so I looked up how much time there was for those questions. In my own committee, there were wasteful, performative and theatrical questions totalling 317 minutes for non-government members, but there were only 245 minutes for government members. I wish to apologise to those government members and some of the Independent members in this place who want to build and who want to find out things constructively. I want to apologise for cutting them off and giving opposition members so much time that was then wasted and not used for the construction of Queensland.

That is what the member for Broadwater said—that he wanted to give more time to non-government members. However, we should not look at what the member for Broadwater says; we should look at what he does. He wanted more time for non-government members, so let us look back to the 2014 Newman LNP government and compare that to what we did last time. At the last estimates, 61 per cent was given to non-government questions. Let us look at what the member for Broadwater did. When he was in government for the 2014 estimates, 51 per cent of the time—the majority—was used by the government.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** That is right. Members are reminding the House that they ran them all simultaneously, with only seven members against them. They were so afraid of scrutiny that they ran them all simultaneously.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Member for Glass House, cease your interjections.

**Mr POWER:** They were so afraid of media examination of what they were doing that they ran them all simultaneously. It was quite gross and disgusting. When it came to questioning in the then Finance and Administration Committee and now Economics and Governance Committee, there were 326 minutes for government questions and 303 minutes for non-government questions. The overwhelming majority went to the government. Let us not look at what the member for Broadwater says in his little op-eds when he fails; let us look at what he did in government.

As chair of a committee, I am charged with enforcing the rules for questions, and those rules are quite easy to follow. Faulkner and Ray could follow them. The rules for questions state that questions shall be brief and relate to one issue and that questions shall not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, arguments, inferences or imputations. Almost every single question they put—

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Glass House, I have asked you multiple times to come to order. You will be warned.

**Mr POWER:** Almost every question they put broke one of those rules. It was so bad that I had given up. I simply counselled them and then put the question to the Premier or the Treasurer because every single question—

**Ms Bates:** You just rule them out of order.

**Mr POWER:** I do not rule them out of order. Look at the transcript. To make it work, I have to allow these people to break the rules of the parliament because they are so bad at doing their jobs that they cannot find a way to examine the budget within the rules of the parliament, and I give them the majority of time to do it. We know that estimates is something like Christmas for budget nerds, but unfortunately it is like Halloween for the member for Broadwater. He is so bad at it that the rumbling will start again and the pressure will be so bad for him. Once again, the clock will come around and there will be a calendar item reminding him to complain about the process when we know that he did completely the opposite in government. That is what disappoints me.

The other point is the number of questions they asked. In my own committee, there were 66 government questions directed to a minister. How many do members think the opposition had? They had 157 questions—more than twice as many. We give the opposition the opportunity but the member for Broadwater fails at the opportunity. The member for Broadwater cannot follow through and actually ask questions that mean something to Queenslanders. Why does he fail? He fails because we have a good story to tell about a hardworking government that is focused on the challenges we have, and we will continue to do that because we know that is our job. We listen to ordinary Queenslanders—not those preening and performing before the cameras—and we get a budget that is right for them. I, for one, will be putting questions to ministers about Logan—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** I hear an interjection from the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach. The member for Mermaid Beach would make an excellent Manager of Opposition Business—we know that.

**An honourable member:** Bring back Ray!

**Mr POWER:** Bring back Ray! #bringbackray, as the member for Kawana would say. The other thing is that he would put more incisive questions, possibly about Mermaid Beach and the Gold Coast, but it is the member for Broadwater whose very questions get him undone. Yes, we have given them over 60 per cent of the time. We will probably do that again. We will give them the overwhelming majority of questions, but they will not actually be able to do anything with it.

We on this side of the House do not look to the 60-odd per cent of the time the opposition have for questions. We should not look to the fact that they can ask twice as many questions of ministers. We need to look to the member for Broadwater and his failure to engage with this process. When we get the story that he gets an op-ed, we need to say that there is a broken system. The broken system is the broken opposition, who fail to engage with the facts we have in Queensland.

This is an exciting time. It is an exciting budget. We are living in untested times where much of the world will go into recession because of supply problems. Usually it is about demand: people have a lack of confidence to spend. Now we have an unusual challenge in that supply will be constrained

across the world. This is something that a real opposition would collaboratively and interestingly engage with in terms of the challenges we have in Queensland. However, that will not happen because the member for Broadwater will once again fail and once again blame the system, the empire, the Premier, the Treasurer—everyone around him will be blamed. Let's have the member for Mermaid Beach ask the questions because he would be far better at it.