



Speech By
Linus Power

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.41 am): I rise to speak to the committee report on the Appropriation Bill 2022 and the budget estimates for 2022-23. The Economics and Governance Committee met for a full 12 hours of hearings to ensure that this committee could examine the budget for the coming year. Truly, we are living in some pretty extraordinary times. The Premier and the Treasurer spoke to our committee and answered questions about the key issues, the strengths and the challenges of the Queensland budget and the Queensland economy. It is clear that our economy is one of the strongest in recovering from the first stages of the impact of COVID-19. We have significant challenges from this success with thousands coming to our state from southern states.

We know that this government backs the services we need. We invest in the services, the roads, the ambulances and the ambulance stations, and especially in the hospitals that we know the LNP did not invest in and would cut if they were drawing up the Queensland budget. Importantly, one of the first questions I put to the Premier was about the continuing challenge of COVID on our economy, our health services and our lifestyle. The Premier briefed the committee on the latest expected modelling, which was tabled, showing that COVID continues to impact Queenslanders and their access to the health service. At that stage, there were some 1,170 patients in our hospitals and thousands of health workers affected with COVID or flu, and 21 Queenslanders had tragically died in the previous 24 hours. The Premier went on to be asked by the member for Hervey Bay about the investment in hospitals, and the Premier spoke about the record investment in hospitals in our state, which I am pleased to say includes a significant investment of 112 additional beds at the Logan Hospital.

These questions relate to important issues that impact all Queenslanders. They are vital to the key question that we were examining: that the expenditure in the budget be agreed to. However, this was not the approach of some of our guest members. Instead, they sought to make disgraceful attacks with no basis in fact. I want to, on behalf of the committee—and I would like to think the whole committee, but certainly at least three members—apologise to Mr Tony Keyes. I recognise that he is a highly respected public servant who had served the Newman LNP government where he was rightfully not criticised. However in the gotcha culture of the LNP, serious questions in our budget and our economy have no place. Instead, we saw pathetic attempts by the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Maroochydore to malign hardworking and highly respected public servants. The member for Maroochydore five times falsely asserted that Mr Keyes worked for the Labor Party, and despite that

assertion being contradicted by the Premier in answer to the very first question, she persisted in attempting to undermine the Acting Integrity Commissioner. As chair, I counselled the member to follow the standing orders and not make assertions that were not supported by facts. It is a disgrace that the member for Maroochydore continued to attack Mr Keyes.

The member for Maroochydore was told in no uncertain terms that 23 years ago he was seconded and directed to advise on a single bill for six weeks, but the member persisted. Finally this assertion was made to Mr Keyes directly. As chair, I felt it was important that Mr Keyes had the opportunity to address this slur against his character. Mr Keyes answered—

I have never been a Labor Party staffer. At the relevant time I was an employee of the Central Land Council, which is a Commonwealth statutory authority. The director of the Land Council made my services available and directed me to relocate to then senator Bolkus's office in order to provide legal and policy advice in respect of ...

a single bill—

On the second part of the member's question—

This was the slur against his character—Mr Keyes regretfully had to say, and he should never have to say because he is highly respected—

I would simply say that I have always striven to perform my public duties with utmost professionalism and integrity and in a strictly nonpartisan way. I have done that in my previous roles and I intend to do it in the current role.

One would have thought that this very act of decency and integrity by a hardworking public servant would silence them, but no. The Leader of the Opposition continued to lead with these slurs. I apologise to Mr Keyes. Moreover, I apologise to all of the hardworking public servants who live in fear of slurs against their character from the opposition. If the member for Maroochydore had a single piece of integrity she would apologise to Mr Keyes. The report itself should have contained an apology to Mr Keyes. It is regretful that this incident happened.