



Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.02 pm): I rise to speak to report No. 30 of the Economics and Governance Committee which outlined the committee's estimates hearing on Tuesday, 26 July. During the estimates hearing the committee heard from the Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament, the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement.

The committee heard about the budget spending of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the funding allocated for the Brisbane 2032 task force and the establishment of the commission of inquiry to examine the Queensland police responses to domestic and family violence. I note that the budget of this department also outlined an increase in funding to Screen Queensland to fund the development and operation of the Far North Queensland studio in Cairns.

The committee heard all of these things, yet the only thing that seemed to attract the interest of opposition members—specifically those guests who visited—was a decidedly unnatural obsession with laptops. In a display that could rival my 12-year-old daughter, the muttering, the childish interjections, the interruptions and the occasional outburst of 'What was on the laptop?' showed an opposition that had no interest in the examination of the budget. This opposition has the gall to sit and moan about the standard of accountability in committees and during the estimates process.

An entire day—9 am to 9 pm—of this committee was devoted to examining the spending of departments, yet so few questions were actually devoted to the budget or expenditure of the government. I have heard this morning in this debate that there was time wasting by the committee in order to limit the questions by opposition members. I would argue that the opposition members could hardly structure a question that was in accordance with the sessional and standing orders. The fact that opposition members cannot ask a question at this point about a budget shows exactly the contempt they have for this process.

Over on the opposition side, I am sure there is a member who is capable of structuring a question. I believe that the member for Ninderry is trained as an investigator and knows how to ask a question that is not leading and that does not contain inferences or imputations, but I am afraid he got only two or three questions the entire day. That shows just how much time wasting could be avoided if the members could actually put forward questions about the budget and within the sessional orders.

I have heard those opposite complain this morning and in the statement of reservation about the amount of money 'squandered' by this government. They talk about Wellcamp—I just heard a lovely treatise about Wellcamp. During the estimates hearing we also heard a little more about 1 William Street and what those members left us in terms of the costs that will be borne by future governments because of the deal they did for 1 William Street. We should talk about the squandering, the sale of assets and the debt that we will be incurring year after year. We heard that the rent of that building is increasing. Governments in Queensland will be forever spending more and more money for 1 William Street—the one piece of infrastructure they built during their time in government.

We have invested massive amounts of money in infrastructure—roads, schools and water infrastructure—not just here in South-East Queensland but throughout Queensland. The one thing that opposition members were able to give Queensland was a building that Queensland taxpayers are now committed to paying millions and millions of dollars for each year. That is what we heard about government spending during estimates.

The previous speaker was quite hooked on the Treasurer's spending in relation to information about taxes and levies. I am extremely impressed with the money that will be spent by this government going forward on mental health. Those opposite want to jump up and down about the cost of this massive investment in health. I am going to talk about the massive improvement in wellbeing of Queenslanders because of this spend. If those opposite want to talk about wasteful spending on self-promotion by a treasurer, I have just two words for them: Strong Choices.