



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation (Parliament) Bill**

#### **Economics and Governance Committee, Report**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.35 am): I wish to acknowledge the Parliamentary Service for their support and the wonderful work of the staff during estimates. I particularly mention the Clerk and Mr Speaker for making sure that Parliament House—which I believe is the pre-eminent building in the heritage world of Queensland—is being protected and upgraded with the extra expenditure we are seeing in this parliamentary term. I believe there will be some costs coming through in the following year in terms of other matters that have incomes generated through the Parliamentary Services that will be affected by this year's alterations et cetera, so we will see how that turns out. It is a well-deserved improvement to the parliament and we look forward to the outcomes ASAP.

I share the concerns of the Manager of Opposition Business in relation to the amount of \$28,000 that the Clerk mentioned at estimates was spent in being a party to the Peter Carne matter, which unfortunately has come down in what I believe to be a negative result for the parliament. I can confirm that the Economics and Governance Committee had a brief sojourn to New Zealand several years ago, where the Chief Justice in New Zealand overruled the powers of the parliament in that particular country. The parliament responded by letting the Chief Justice know that they would legislate to overcome her perception that the courts were more powerful than the parliament. I am hoping that, even though there is a cost to this parliament, we do pursue the matter that the parliament is the pre-eminent body for the rule of law in Queensland. We do not want the court's interpretation, whatever that may be, whichever way they may go in these matters, overruling the will and the power of this particular parliament.

In relation to other matters that were raised, the Manager of Opposition Business mentioned the portfolio committee system and that the Clerk advised at estimates that he was disappointed at how the committee system had proceeded following the 2011 bipartisan review. Basically, that is unfortunately the result of a lot of these committee meetings being held in private. His advice was that the original intention was that the portfolio committees—which is basically our alternative to an upper house in a unicameral parliament—should meet in public wherever possible and only move into private when there are issues that need to be considered in private. The reality is that matters are better held in public so they are accountable for the public to see. I think we would all agree that that is a better outcome for the portfolio committee system for the future—as the PCCC does. I note the wonderful chairing of the PCCC by the member for Scenic Rim in these public meetings. That was a paid comment!

**Mr Krause:** No, it wasn't.

**Mr STEVENS:** No, it wasn't; it was an independent comment. I correct the record.

I turn to the other matters that I think were important. I took quite a bit of time and consideration by the Economics and Governance Committee to reach a decision on some matters, like the fact that independent bodies, such as the Auditor-General and the Integrity Commissioner, should be more closely aligned, perhaps through legislation, to the portfolio committee system. Basically, now where they are really under the control or direction of the Premier's department it is a bit like Caesar judging Caesar on these matters. The Clerk's advice was that he believed they should be more tied to the portfolio committee system in the future, but that is another matter that we will have to raise. I thank the Clerk and Mr Speaker for their attendance and for their very full explanations to the committee in all matters in relation to the Parliamentary Service. I look forward to a great year ahead, despite the little conundrum that we have about different venues.