



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

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CONSIDERATION IN DETAIL (COGNATE DEBATE)

Appropriation Bill

State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (3.38 pm): One of the first points I raised in the budget estimates hearing concerned the gas reserve policy, an issue I think I raised in the very first budget estimates hearing I was involved in as a member of this House. At that time I was given reports that for every dollar earned from LNG exports it costs industrial output \$21. Still we have deathly silence from the government about how this will be addressed. Now the impacts of this are staring us in the face—nationally, not just statewide. It is within the state government's power to address it, yet there is a complete lack of acknowledgement of this issue or its solution.

It is extremely frustrating, especially when the area that I represent is 100 per cent gas-fired power and before COVID disruptions boasted the most expensive industrial power in not just the country but the world—and it is still not being addressed; we are turning a blind eye. Government members should not give me this nonsense about this Mickey Mouse gas reserve policy in the Surat Basin. It is nonsense. It is what you tell people when you do not want to really deliver it. It is insulting to the public to say that. Either agree with it or do not, but do not pretend you have a policy when you do not. I was very disappointed by the response I got on that issue.

The next issue is one I roll out every year and never get a decent response to. We hear so much about asset sales. The government says that they are not going to sell assets. That is good. I agree with them. They like throwing rocks at the previous government, but here is the point on this. With the impetus for asset sales and privatisation, accounting standards were changed. Returns were based on asset values. Asset values can be written down at any time based on the accounting standard. Prices are a reflection of the accounting standards used.

My question then is: if the government is not going to privatise or sell assets why is it still adopting the methodology and standards to get a revenue from them that relates to their private ownership? If we do not need to lend money at a commercial rate why are we still agreeing to do that under a national accord because that bumps up the price of power? If ideologically the government refuses to sell assets then they do not need to adopt these accounting models. They are obsolete or irrelevant. That is an issue I have and it directly impacts the infrastructure in the area I represent.

The next issue I would like to discuss is the Olympic Games. I do not believe the nonsense. The response I received was that because the federal government is going to invest in infrastructure that it otherwise would not have invested in because we have the Olympic Games that will represent savings

for us that will give us more money to build infrastructure in the north-west, in the electorate of Traeger and in other areas. I am sorry, but I do not buy that. I am sure a lot of Queenslanders who live in regional areas do not buy that either. If the government is going to try to make me believe that there is going to be a \$15 billion to \$20 billion sink hole in the budget, both federally and state, because I am an Australian just as much as I am a Queenslander, and there is not going to be an impact on the ability to deliver critically needed infrastructure in the regions—and I am talking about health infrastructure as well—then they are having a lend of me. I will never accept that. That beggars belief.

Whilst we have only 10 renal chairs in the Mount Isa Hospital when Alice Springs has over 60 for a similar footprint and we are treating the Olympic Games as a priority, I will not agree with it. That would never be right. We should never prioritise spending on something like the Olympic Games before we provide the most basic health services in remote areas. That is something I took issue with.

I raised CopperString again. It seems to be used more as headline rather than something to be delivered. It is all there ready for delivery. We are having power disruptions. They are talking about using the old Mica Creek Power Station in one of the most extreme circumstances of high gas prices to fill a hole when we just need to announce CopperString. It is waiting for cabinet to agree to it. Do it now. Stop talking about it, stop announcing it and get it built.

HIPCo is a water project in North-West Queensland. The government has the opportunity to be the leader in providing a sustainable water supply to the driest parts of our state. That would be a wonderful thing to do. It would empower a lot of battlers out there who are trying to make ends meet. There would be better land condition outcomes if they had water reliability through water storage. Millions of megalitres are flowing out to sea. We are not even taking two or three per cent of it. How about we take four, five or 10 per cent of it. That would be nice. The government's policies and attitude have blocked that. They are the things that we should have been talking about more and we did not get answers on.