



Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Health and Environment Committee, Report

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.27 am): I rise to make a brief contribution in the cognate debate on the appropriation bills with particular reference to the report of the Health and Environment Committee on the estimates process. At the outset, I want to draw the House's attention to the statement of the chair of the committee in his opening remarks at estimates. I quote from the transcript—

The House has determined that the committee will examine estimates for its portfolio areas as follows: health from 9 am to 12.15 pm, ambulance services from 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm, environment and the Great Barrier Reef from 2.30 pm to 4.15 pm ...

I have done the maths, and that is broken down to the following: three hours and 15 minutes to review the state's health budget, which is almost half the entire expenditure of the Queensland state government; one hour to review issues around ambulance services; and just one hour and 45 minutes to consider budgets and budgetary matters in regard to the environment and the Great Barrier Reef.

I raise this issue because I want to put on record again my frustration and concern that more time is not allocated to these incredibly important portfolio areas of the government. I do not think there is a member in the House who would disagree about the importance of health spending and the need for greater scrutiny, nor do I believe there would be a member in the House who would disagree that there are some challenges in respect of ambulance services.

Given the gravity and debate around environmental issues and protection of the Great Barrier Reef, I think it is a shame that we only had one hour and 45 minutes to prosecute issues in respect of the environment and the government's commitment to environmental measures.

I also wanted to draw the House's attention to comments by the Minister for Health in her opening address. I think I probably could have written the script myself prior to the meeting because there was no surprise about what we heard from the Minister for Health. She stated—

Demand for health services is rising rapidly, as is our population; by 2041 it is estimated to grow to seven million people, up from 5.2 million people this year.

I just draw your attention to that figure of 5.2 million this year. She went on to say—

An ageing population means an increase in patients with complex health needs. A decline in Queenslanders with private health coverage and a lack of funding for hardworking GPs ...

That also adds to the pressures and challenges. The minister went on to say—

Our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan outlines how we are addressing these issues now and in the future. It is a big and exciting list.

Members, I am not sure that it is big enough and nor that exciting. I want to draw the House's attention to some reports that I downloaded from the department of state development and planning. I am not sure if all members are aware of the documents and the forecasts that Treasury and the department of planning produce, but in a report that I downloaded from the department of state development and planning's website, there is a spreadsheet available and it is a document that is relied on by councils, local government authorities and other departments of government that is produced by Treasury and then also supported and republished by the department of planning. This document outlines projections for growth.

I note that since the 2021 census data has been released more recently, there have been some updates, but this document published in 2016 is still online and I think it needs some inspection. In that Excel spreadsheet that you are able to download—it is a planning document provided by the state—they provide projections around growth and they are low, medium and high. I have a little bit of experience with these projections because when I was a city councillor, we relied on that data, as far back as 20 years ago. We looked at projections from the previous three decades. What those projections illustrate was that on every single occasion in the previous three decades—and I can confirm that the same has occurred now—Queensland's population growth, including the Gold Coast population growth, has always exceeded the highest projection made available in the previous decade. It has always exceeded that growth.

(Time expired)