



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.46 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the report and indeed the fantastic budget that has been presented by the Palaszczuk government. I will first start with a quick rebuttal. The member for Glass House criticised me for clarifying where the questions came from during estimates. I say that when they stopped interjecting and stopped making snide remarks, I could hear them clearly each time. That is something to look forward to next year.

I will start with some simple stats. Five hours and 11 minutes of time in our committee hearing was granted to non-government members. Two hours and 28 minutes of time was granted to government members. Non-government members had over twice the amount of time to ask the questions that they needed to. They had a lot of time, yet they still complain, as we have already seen, but as the Treasurer said earlier, if you want better answers, ask better questions. For us, that means making sure you ask questions that adhere to standing orders, however we saw that constantly disregarded by those opposite during our committee hearing.

We had a member bring in a toy elephant as a prop, for goodness sake. That reveals the dismissive attitude of the opposition to estimates. I want to say this about the attitude of opposition members during estimates: their attitudes towards Queensland's public servants was very concerning—derisive, dismissive and denigrating. Witnesses before the committee were subjected to aggressive questioning, hectoring and dismissive comments from opposition members. I believe their treatment of public servants has not changed since they were last in government when they got rid of 14,000 public servants.

The LNP members during estimates hearings displayed no real interest in examining the budget beyond searching for political advantage. Their questioning was concerned with simple political posturing, not examining expenditure. Queenslanders should be concerned that the opposition show no real interest in the process or programs of government, but are only interested in political gamesmanship.

People have called for an end to questions from government members, but I always say that you will learn a lot from listening to the government members' questions and the answers. What we learned this year—

Mrs Frecklington: What are the answers?

Mr WHITING: For the benefit of members opposite I will go through that again. There is \$8.2 billion in cost-of-living relief measures. That includes a \$550 electricity rebate for every Queensland household and \$1,072 for all eligible pensioners; \$650 back on electricity bills for eligible small businesses—that is over 200,000 small businesses throughout Queensland—and free kindy, 15 hours a week for four-year-old Queensland kids. That will save some Queensland families over \$4,000 a year. A nice one I always like to see is the cost of just \$35 to replace a driver's licence. They are great cost-of-living relief measures.

I do want to give a special commendation to the last minister we saw on the day. Often the last minister does not receive much attention. I want to commend Minister Butcher for what he said, and I will go through some of these things. We have created \$5.2 billion in water infrastructure since 2015, creating or supporting 3,400 jobs, and dedicated \$540 million to raising Burdekin Falls Dam. That will increase its capacity by the equivalent of six Rookwood Weirs.

Mrs Frecklington: Where's the business case?

Mr WHITING: Member, I saw your many questions in estimates on this. You got your answer numerous times.

Mrs Frecklington: The business case, there is none.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): The member for Nanango will cease your interjections. Through the chair, please, member for Bancroft.

Mr WHITING: Let me point out that Rookwood Weir is the largest weir built in Australia since World War II.

Mrs Frecklington: Yes, thanks to the former federal government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, there will be no more warnings.

Mr WHITING: I do want to commend the minister for the concealed leak policy he announced on the day. The opposition shows great chutzpah in pursuing us on the subject of train and rail. When those opposite oversaw the inland rail debacle it went from \$9 billion up to \$31 billion under the federal LNP. No-one knows where it starts or where it ends. They can keep pursuing this subject of trains all they like, but that record of theirs is one of the biggest bin fires in Queensland history.

(Time expired)