



Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (12.10 pm): One of the most disappointing things about this state Labor government is that they claim to have assigned resources to areas such as housing and then failed to build the houses. They claim to have assigned funding to health services and then failed to address the need for and the shortage of actual hospital beds. In so many areas they have made big promises and unfortunately have let down some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

This Premier has given up on integrity by failing to give a clear time frame for the implementation of all of the Coaldrake recommendations. I hear she is trying to make light of and pass the buck in regard to one of the recommendations of Coaldrake's damning report into the culture of the public sector under her watch. Professor Coaldrake recommended that there be a complaints clearing house. Why does it matter? It matters because whistleblowers need to be able to raise issues about the government and government services and have those matters properly addressed and properly investigated. The Premier has walked away from doing that. She is making light of it. In fact, she is making a joke of it. That tells you everything. It is all about spin and media management. She has heaps of media and communication people working for her and her government but not enough people delivering houses and ensuring that the most vulnerable people in our community who need key frontline services can actually benefit from them.

Let's talk about the estimate process. It is an absolute joke when you see some of these chairs interfering and interrupting somebody asking a question. They will say that they are there to keep order when they are the ones who are creating the disorder. You can be 26 words into a question and you have a chair who wants to interrupt you. You try to keep your question going and they try to interrupt you again. It is completely inappropriate, and it is a deliberate strategy. It is not just that they are hacks and they are poor chairs. It is a deliberate strategy to try to obstruct questions being put to the government. They are trying to give themselves a tick in their pecking order within their own ranks. What they are in fact doing is obstructing democracy by interrupting legitimate questions and then asking for those questions to be reframed.

Mr BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As a former Speaker herself, the member should realise that she cannot reflect on the chair. Even though it is not at that point in time, you still cannot reflect on the chair's orders.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Let me rule on that point of order first, member for Mansfield. Please take your seat. I remind all members to be cautious of directly reflecting on the chair. It is okay to make general statements about the performance of estimates, but let's not reflect generally on the chair. Member for Mansfield, do you have a point of order?

Ms McMILLAN: My point of order relates to the fact that I take personal offence at the comments made by the member for Maroochydore and I do not appreciate my professionalism being questioned.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, resume your seat. I was listening carefully to the member for Maroochydore. She did not mention you by name. She mentioned 'chairs'.

Ms McMILLAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am a chair of a committee and I take personal offence at the comments being made.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, I think you have been here long enough to understand that you cannot take personal offence unless you are mentioned. We have had rulings by the Speaker before that when members reflect on the government they are not personally reflecting on members. Member, for you to take personal offence you need to be directly referred to. There is no point of order.

Ms SIMPSON: The process of estimates should allow for free flowing questions and answers. There are other jurisdictions that do it far better. That process was started in this House. I do not want to see any effort to try to gag us discussing how we can do estimates better because it can be done better and it must be done better. I refute the claims of the Premier that they were in fact allowing a proper estimates process.

Ms Farmer interjected.

A government member interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, you will cease your interjections. Member, you will cease your interjections as well or I will start warning more members.

Ms SIMPSON: This government has presided over a \$2.4 billion blowout in its Train Manufacturing Program and also a blowout in Cross River Rail. Yet it was like pulling hen's teeth to try to get straight answers out of the government both in and outside the chamber.

I think that goes to the culture of this government. It is a culture of cover-ups. It is a culture of blowouts and cover-ups. The people who pay the price are those who do not get their critical frontline services in a timely way, are those who do not get their houses built and are those who do not get roads constructed in a timely way where there is a high and growing rate of road deaths. There is a need to address those frontline services.

It may not matter to the Treasurer that there was a \$2.4 billion blowout in that program and that they did not come clean about it for a couple of months, but these things do matter. They are issues of integrity and accountability for which this government does not want to be held to account. We will call them out because it matters.

The people of Queensland deserve to be told the truth and not have all of these slippery little excuses of who did what—no, they are not responsible; it was a staff member, so they blame the staff member. Figures were deliberately taken out of public documents and not reported in a clear way about significant cost blowouts. This is the culture of this government. Coaldrake exposed it in the *Let the sunshine in* report. This government is still shady and does not want to address not only the key recommendations that they have not yet put a time line on to deliver but also the ministerial oversight of their staff, where departmental people are acting on what they believe are directions to do things in the name of their minister.

(Time expired)