



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.55 pm): After that disgusting behaviour in the House, it is no wonder they think the estimates system does not suit them. In all of the time we had—and there were hours; this committee had the longest set time—the facts, according to the chair, are that 30 per cent of the time was taken up with government questions and about 69 per cent of the time was taken up by those opposite. I would not mind if they were asking me questions about our \$17.8 billion budget. I would not mind if they wanted more information on free kindy and how we will roll it out. I would not mind if they talked about the \$2.1 billion infrastructure spend, the nearly \$50 million in remote teacher housing, the new special school in Logan, other schools, and our tuckshops and playgrounds funding. I would not mind if we talked about the independent review of racing which shows that racing is thriving in this state. I would not mind if we talked about the new sustainable funding model which is the envy of every other state and territory in the country. If you talk to any trainer or any person in racing they will tell you that they think what we have done in Queensland is unbelievable. In industrial relations, I would not mind talking about our leading record in standing up for workers, new codes that give stronger protection for workers or the changes to the IR Act that strengthen worker protection.

Instead, what do we hear? We hear a character assassination of public servants, which has been never-ending, by the member for Kawana. He continually attacks a senior public servant in the department. There is a big difference between claiming corruption and collusion to the CCC and the breach of a workplace code of conduct. When that was found, the department took action. An appeal was lodged in the QIRC. The QIRC, as we know, is public and publishes its decision. The decision was that there was a breach, and action was taken by the department. It has nothing to do with corruption or collusion in the CCC.

The fact that the member for Kawana, as a previous IR minister, does not understand the distinction between the thresholds of corruption and collusion versus a breach of a workplace procedure is outstanding. It is incredible. What do we get? We get the character assassination of a person who was merely defending their rights. People have a right to appeal and they have a right to set the record straight. In this case, the decision was handed down. Somehow we are supposed to interpret that decision for the member for Kawana. The member for Kawana should do his homework and make his own interpretation. We are not here to do that.

WorkCover gave a \$1,000 donation to the CEO Sleepout. That program's ambassador is Matt Kratiuk. Matt is the St Vinnie's CEO Sleepout ambassador. This man's life is an open book. He turned his life around. In fact, Matt says—

My life today is just miraculous. People need to know I was that guy you walk past on the train and you think he is too far gone. He is past the point of no return.

But the fact is, that's not the case. All these people need is to be loved back to life, and I'm happy to work very hard and rally for any organisation such as Vinnies that's going to be a part of that journey for people.

Matt has turned his life around. He is an ambassador for Vinnies. He has raised hundreds of thousands for homelessness because he thought he was at the end of his road. He has turned it around. He speaks to some of the major law firms—contributors to the LNP, I might add—and some of the most prominent boardrooms in Queensland and around the world. It was a thousand dollar donation. He was not employed by WorkCover. It was an informal, voluntary address if staff wanted to come along to hear Matt as a St Vinnies CEO Sleepout Ambassador, yet the character assassination by the member for Kawana in this House is absolutely appalling. He said that Matt mentioned WorkCover on his website. I wonder whether he mentioned that John Howard was a big supporter of Matt Kratiuk.