



Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2023


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report on the budget estimates and the Appropriation Bill. What do the Governor's Rolls Royce, hypothetical tsunamis and the location of polling booths have in common? These are the priorities of the Leader of the Opposition. These are the big questions that are affecting Queenslanders today, according to the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP. I have been in this role for nearly three years and Queenslanders have spoken to me about a lot of things, but not one person has ever queried me on whether the Queensland Governor is considering electrifying her Rolls Royce car—not one—yet this occupied the interest and the time invested by the opposition during estimates.

I was stunned to hear the Leader of the Opposition state in his contribution that the committee system is broken because it does not allow enough time for the appropriate scrutiny of the performance of departments. I am happy to share with the Leader of the Opposition a professional tip that I learned many years ago—that is, focus. A lack of organisation on behalf of the LNP is not an 'us' problem; it is a 'you' problem. We all know the time frames that we have available to us going into estimates hearings. Every working Queenslander would be familiar with how workplace meetings are run. There is an agenda and a time frame, and it is on all attendees to be organised and focused and to be clear on what their priorities are and where they want to dedicate their attention, as I did. I have heard the comments from members opposite that the government questions were Dixers. The fact that our Dixers were more hard-hitting and revealing than the questions from those opposite is also a 'you' problem.

Amongst the lines of questioning, I sought an update from the Attorney-General in relation to the appointment of a victims commissioner for Queensland. It was announced that the Palaszczuk government will recruit an interim commissioner while the legislation and the legislative framework for this permanent independent statutory appointment are being developed. The interim commissioner will be appointed, as we have heard this morning, in October this year, ahead of the introduction of legislation early in 2024 to establish a permanent victims commissioner, who will be appointed by the end of this financial year. This is something that Queenslanders are speaking to me about. The permanent independent statutory appointment is responsible for promoting and protecting the interests and the rights of victims of crime through education and training, systemic inquiry and advisory functions, together with complaint-handling functions. It is an important step to ensure victims' voices are heard and their rights are promoted and protected.

I also inquired into the recycling scheme operating at the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. Lotus Glen established the environmental management recycling program last year after it was identified that 50 tonnes of rubbish per month, including food and plastic waste, were going to landfill. We heard from the minister that around 700 kilograms of waste are collected and sorted each day, with up to an additional 500 kilograms of food waste. The program employs 32 prisoners, teaching them skills in waste management. The centre is currently exploring the potential for formal sustainability qualification pathways for prisoners. Since the commencement of the program, approximately 180 tonnes of food waste alone have been diverted from landfill. This has prevented an estimated 12,000 kilos of methane being released into the atmosphere. Again, these are the issues that people are speaking to me about.

On a final note, it was acknowledged during estimates—and I acknowledge again—the tragic loss of police constables Rachel McCrow and Matthew Arnold, whose lives were taken through homicide late last year, as well as firefighter Izzy Nash, who tragically lost her life in the line of duty earlier this year. These deaths continue to serve as a stark reminder of the dangers that our first responders encounter in their chosen professions, and we thank them deeply for their service. I commend the report to the House.