



Speech By
Kim Richards

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.44 pm): I have listened to a number of contributions in this place today, so I just want to start off with some facts because facts are important. The fact is that our Education, Employment and Training Committee hearing went for seven hours and 49 minutes. Of the seven hours and 49 minutes government questions went for two hours and 34 minutes and non-government questions went for four hours and 47 minutes. There were 186 questions asked throughout our estimates process. That was 186 questions. Of those, 35 questions were asked by the government and they were all very good questions, all interrogating the budget. There were 151 questions that were asked by the non-government members. Let me say that again: that is 35—

Mr Mander: How many of them were answered?

Ms RICHARDS: I am not taking your interjections.

Mr Mander: No, how many of them were answered?

Ms RICHARDS: I am not taking your interjections. There were 35 questions from government members and 151 from non-government members. Of those, 46.2 per cent were asked of the minister and 53.8 per cent of the director-general and other officers. They are the facts of how our estimates hearing was conducted. A very generous amount of time was allotted to members who are equally representative of this parliament.

I want to talk about behaviour, language and tone because how we conduct ourselves in this place is what is on display to our communities. To the member for Moggill, I say thank you; to the member for Buderim, I say thank you; even to the member for Everton in the racing portfolio, I say thank you. However, to the member for Kawana, I say my goodness gracious me, that is absolutely again extraordinarily disrespectful behaviour towards a committee chair.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms RICHARDS: That is absolutely and extraordinarily disrespectful behaviour towards a committee chair. It is disrespectful behaviour, totally unnecessary and totally irrelevant to the estimates process. It was time wasted by the member for Kawana. It was absolutely disgraceful behaviour.

Mr Bleijie: I will give you a disgraceful—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member for Kawana.

Ms RICHARDS: The member for Kawana sets the tone and he is doing it right now.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms RICHARDS: That is the behaviour Queenslanders really do not want to see. That is the behaviour that members really do not want to see.

The process was fair to everybody in allowing them to ask questions. We interrogated the education budget and we looked at a range of issues with robustness and rigour. We got to look at all of the great work and some of the challenges that are being faced in all of those portfolios. The world is never perfect.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Ms RICHARDS: In education, we got to look at all of the air conditioning works that have been completed for all of our schools.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, several times I have asked you to cease your interjections. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Stafford, that is not required either.

Ms RICHARDS: We looked at important programs that are going to provide cost-of-living relief such as free kindy and the investment in infrastructure, a huge investment in school infrastructure, the new schools that are on the drawing board, our schools that are getting new playground upgrades and new tuckshop upgrades, student wellbeing—all of those things are really important to Queenslanders. They are important to our school communities. They are important to teachers and to students.

In the racing space we looked at a number of elements. We looked at the betting tax revenue and what that is contributing to racetrack infrastructure and we also looked at country racing. The member for Hinchinbrook is very passionate about country racing as is the member for Rockhampton.

With regard to industrial relations, so much time was absolutely wasted in not genuinely interrogating all of the aspects of industrial relations and its importance to workers here in Queensland. Time was wasted with media sensationalist bad behaviour, to put it simply. In the area of training, we looked at Fee-Free TAFE and the TAFE upgrades. We have seen some great work in that space. In the area of small business, we looked at the Queensland Workforce Strategy and the jobs committees. I thank the Small Business Commissioner for appearing. In the youth justice space, we looked at a range of complex issues that our society is facing. There are challenges that we all need to be on the same page to solve. This process was fair and equitable and interrogated an important budget for all Queenslanders.