



Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation Bill**

#### **Economics and Governance Committee, Report**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.45 am): As the chair of the Economics and Governance Committee I rise to inform the House that after the Appropriation Bill was moved in the parliament we held hearings to put questions to the Premier, the Treasurer and the minister for tourism and sport, and their staff. Each year in this process we get the opportunity to ask questions about some of the key government initiatives and key government expenditure that is in the budget.

We have heard the member for Glass House say that he had problems with the chairing of the committee. It is fine that he holds that view. However, the greatest criticism that he had was that, when I was chairing meetings for over 12 hours, the worst I could do—and he had to highlight it because it was the worst—was to ask to whom the question was addressed. That is something that happens relatively regularly within the parliament. Certainly it is something that happens within our normal briefings when I ask for clarification as to which officer a question was addressed. Obviously, it is something that is incredibly brief when the answer will be either ‘the minister’ or ‘the director-general’. That takes no time whatsoever. That is seemingly the worst criticism that they have.

One has to wonder about that when they say that they feel that they were not putting questions to actually get what they want. What they want, of course, is to hurt the government. I can give them a few hints. One of the things they could do is to put forward questions on whether there was a surplus or a deficit. Of course, we know that there was not just an extraordinary surplus; there was a record surplus for any state in Australia, but they did not want to ask questions about that. They did not want to ask any questions that showed Queenslanders the strong fiscal position of this government. They especially did not want to ask questions if the answers would highlight the difference between our strong fiscal position and the weaker position that the Liberals have put people in Victoria or, indeed, the Victoria government in. They did not want those questions asked or answered even though one of the key things about the budget is the fiscal position.

What point have we come to when the Liberal National Party do not want to ask questions about fiscal rectitude? They have thrown away everything they used to stand for. Can members imagine what John Howard would say if he was told that the LNP in Queensland avoided, ducked and weaved any serious questions on the finances of Queensland? They did not want to ask questions about investment in housing. They did not want to talk about the 9.6 per cent increase in health funding. They did not

want to talk about tackling the cost of living with \$8.2 billion invested in a \$550 cost-of-living rebate on Queenslanders' electricity bills and an over \$700 rebate for vulnerable households. We know that pensioners on low incomes value that. This morning we heard the Premier speak about pensioners who thought there must have been a mistake when their bill went down to \$20. There is no mistake that this side of the House backs Queenslanders who are facing extraordinary pressure from the high cost of energy. We back them and we have given them discounts, but there were no questions asked about that.

There were no questions about the \$645 million invested in providing free kindy. When their children are at kindy is the time Queensland parents face the highest costs. Kindy is a vital step. There were no questions about that.

There were no questions about the Big Build—\$89 billion over four years—or our strong commitment to keep investing in Queensland. Even though costs have increased all around the world—the cost of concrete, electrical parts, steel and so on—we are still committed to fighting for Queenslanders and delivering the services they need through the Big Build, yet there were no questions about any of these good things in the budget. It is vitally important that we hold the government to account and show the good things it has done.