



Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Transport and Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport and Resources Committee report on the estimates process for both the energy and the resources portfolios. These portfolios are not only critical to our state's economic development but also, with energy in particular, critical to addressing the cost-of-living crisis being presided over by those opposite. We know that one of the biggest challenges facing Queenslanders is, undoubtedly, their electricity bill. Queenslanders have been promised cheaper electricity bills by the Palaszczuk government on hundreds of occasions, yet every Queenslander knows that this has not happened. The Premier and her energy minister are quick to blame others, in a desperate attempt to deflect their responsibility. We have heard a raft of excuses for increasing power prices. One being commonly touted is the war in Ukraine. That is why I am sure members will appreciate my astonishment when the CS Energy CEO confirmed that the Ukraine war and international factors were not contributing to coal prices being consumed by the energy generators. Mr Busine confirmed that there are indeed long-term agreements not influenced by those international factors, showing that the Premier and the minister have been misleading the public on this issue.

The Department of Energy and Public Works director-general also acknowledged that the explosion at the Callide Power Station did have an impact on electricity prices—something that has also been acknowledged by the Auditor-General. These statements are in complete contradiction to comments made by the energy minister in this parliament following the explosion. It is without question that action is required to put downward pressure on electricity prices, yet it seems the minister's only solutions to the spiralling energy costs are subsidies and suggesting Queenslanders should use less electricity.

Whilst the LNP welcomes any relief to the cost of living for families, the government needs to look beyond subsidies to fix the underlying issue with the state's energy system and how prices can be forced down. We know that one of the major issues with the energy system, as the Auditor-General and the MEU have pointed out, is maintenance on state owned power plants. The minister says that he is unaware of any maintenance backlogs, again contradicting what the workers and the unions have been saying. There is certainly more to see here and Queenslanders must be told the truth. We still have not seen the Brady report on the incident at Callide.

I would also like to point out that there was very little mention of hydrogen in this year's estimates. It was mentioned over 30 times last year, but this year it barely rated a mention. I note that that title has been removed from the assistant minister's title, so this year they were silent on hydrogen. The Pioneer-Burdekin dam also has no business case, no funding and no approvals and faces a very uncertain future.

When it comes to resources, chaos and crisis describe this government. We are seeing open warfare among the minister, the Treasurer and one of the state's largest investors and employers following a broken promise from this Labor government. The government is also at war with the Queensland Resources Council, with the minister accusing it of being misleading and being 'frankly absurd' for simply calling out the government's hypocrisy. We have reached the stage where we have seen the Treasurer openly threatening these mining companies. The only thing certain is that this minister's relationship with this industry is at rock bottom. It is arguably one of the state's biggest economic generating industries. For the government to suggest that sovereign risk has not once been raised with it following the tax hike shows a completely deaf ear to this issue.

That is not the only issue to escape the minister's attention, with estimates revealing that it took the minister months to meet with the MEU about safety issues after the MEU's campaign to meet with the minister following 54 serious incidents in Queensland mines. Another issue I pushed was the government turning its back on the Glenden community. I welcome the government's backflip on the proposed worker accommodation and look forward to seeing the legislation the government said it will be introducing. I commend the member for Burdekin for the work he has done on this issue, sticking up for his community while the minister has turned his back on them—creating uncertainty in mining communities across this state.

I would like to thank both government and non-government members of the committee and acknowledge all of the work that goes into preparing for the estimates process. It is a very important part of our democracy. I offer my thanks to them.