



Speech By
Ray Stevens

MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (12.24 pm): It is again my privilege to partake of the estimates committee process for the Economics and Governance Committee. Unlike other speakers who alluded to the chairing of that particular committee, I would like to say that I think the chair this year demonstrated at least a 10 per cent improvement in his obstructive behaviour over last year. In this regard I reflect back on great Labor icons like Robbie Schwarten—there was a rant of Robbie's in the paper today—and Terry Mackenroth and their approach to estimates. They loved questions coming thick and fast because they were over their briefs and they could answer them. This is in contrast to the cover-up, obfuscation, 'repeat the question', and running cover we get today for ministers who do not know their briefs. There are no men of the same quality in those positions today mainly because they cannot find them anywhere in the union movement. That is why we have an estimates process that, as the Leader of the Opposition alluded to, is seriously broken.

Following on from what I have been saying, one of the main issues is that bureaucrats are so frightened to answer questions the director-general of the Premier's department basically gave a political answer to a genuinely straightforward question. I could not believe it when she came back with, 'If you've got any problems you should refer it to the CCC,' which is clearly a political answer from a director-general. I cannot believe they are so frightened to own up to the truth in these matters that they have to run the political line of their political masters, as alluded to by Professor Coaldrake.

The Treasurer continues to shuffle around telling the absolute truth to the people of Queensland about the deal he has done with QIC to pick up 25 per cent of the \$7.8 billion titles office and what assets the QIC swapped for that 25 per cent. They could have been readily saleable assets. Those particular assets may even be sold now, but we cannot find the truth from this Treasurer because again it is hidden behind figure shuffling to make sure they do not get the financial downgrade they deserve. They do deserve it, because just on my quick reckoning alone I have \$10 billion worth of blowouts here: we know the trains are at \$2.4 billion; we have a \$250 million blowout on light rail that is ruining businesses in my area; a \$220 million blowout on the Wellcamp white elephant Wagner donation; a \$1.7 billion blowout on the Gabba redevelopment estimate; and of course there is already a \$4 billion blowout on Cross River Rail. I am told by people in the know that that is not the end of the blowouts on Cross River Rail.

I would really like the Treasurer to provide one project that is on time and on budget, because at this stage everything they touch blows out in expenditure. The \$10 billion in blowouts I have just announced equates to \$2,000 that you could give to every person in Queensland to alleviate the cost of living. As we know from our appearance at the Ekka, which was well supported, the cost of living is the major issue for Queenslanders. The \$10 billion blowouts these guys have contributed to left, right and centre are the main factor in this government costing the people of Queensland enormous amounts of money. They need a new government and they need it now.