




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (3.11 pm): It is interesting to note in this report that while the non-government members did get around twice the amount of time as the government members for questions, that still meant we had just four hours of non-government questions for the entire health and environment portfolios. Anyone who has had the misfortune of sitting through estimates knows just how much of a farce it is. The government members should be commended for managing to take their job seriously as they read out questions to the minister that are written by the minister's office. Those questions are just there to push the government's agenda and run down the clock. This report quantifies that. In the four hours of non-government questions in the health and environment portfolios, non-government members asked 151 questions. In around two hours the government members asked just 29. The non-government members made great use of their time, whereas the government members got out barely 30 questions within that whole period. It is interesting to note the comparison in this report to the estimates hearings under the previous LNP government where the committee that covered the environment portfolio had nearly nine hours of hearing time compared to 6.32 hours in 2022, which includes time for the entire health portfolio.

There was no genuine effort in our hearing to provide transparency. Questions were side-stepped. In some cases they were even called irrelevant, when on further advice from the director-general we found out they were actually within the minister's portfolio. I would like to clarify some of the statement of reservation that we made to the committee for the sake of the minister who has misrepresented it in a number of contributions. I would love nothing more than to talk about youth or science. I have a science degree and even though there is an ever-growing number of grey hairs on my head I am still relatively young.

The last estimates hearings basically became a joke because few of the questions from the non-government members in that section of the hearing were adequately answered. In the hearings I asked about the regional science and innovation hubs and I was told that the department was not responsible for those. Then right at the end of the session when no further questions could be asked I was told that, in fact, it was within the department. I had previous confirmation of the involvement of the Department of Environment and Science from the Chief Entrepreneur in innovation hearings and had questions as to how this program was being rolled out. It was frustrating that we were not allowed to ask about this project. Because of the government chair who was running the show, I was not able to have follow-up questions to clarify this.

A key building block of the Queensland Youth Strategy is housing, yet all the minister could really give us on this was that it was a really complex problem and to attack me for standing with my community over concerns about overdevelopment in areas that the state government has not adequately resourced. It was staggering to have a Gold Coast MP implying support of this inappropriate

development in Labrador, Biggera Waters and Chirn Park, a plan which locals were concerned about and overwhelmingly opposed to. The City of Gold Coast reached a good outcome on the city plan. Just let them get on with it.

Questions about the water tracking and electronic reporting system administered under the science area were not adequately answered as we were told they should have been asked under the previous environment section. Given questions were directly about the use of this system in flood situations that we saw emerge last year, it was disappointing they were struck out. When questioned about whether the government had set any targets for science engagement given it had spent \$30,000 on consultation, this was again swept aside as if it would be ridiculous to set KPIs for something that the department was seeking to achieve.

Even the member for Maiwar could not clearly get a science portfolio question through to the Chief Scientist as he was blocked by the minister. For the minister to get up and complain about feedback on the way that these sessions are allocated, when there is no clarity from the minister about activities under this portfolio, is incredibly disappointing. We want a rigorous estimates process to get transparency and openness for Queenslanders. Queenslanders deserve to know what is really going on and what the government is spending their money on.