




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

COMMITTEES

Estimates Hearings

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.32 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That for the consideration of the annual appropriation bills for 2023-24, so much of standing orders be suspended to enable:
 - (a) the portfolio committees to only hold hearings and take evidence within the timeframes provided in Table 1, circulated in my name;
 - (b) the Leader of the House after consultation with the Speaker, if necessary, to issue a memorandum changing the days and times for each hearing in Table 1;
 - (c) where a minister administers a number of distinct portfolio matters, matters relating to each portfolio area can only be raised during the period specified for that area in Table 1;
 2. That, in accordance with standing order 177(5), each portfolio committee report to the House on the annual appropriation bills by 18 August 2023; and
 3. That standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended by replacing schedule 7 with that in Table 2, effective immediately.
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TABLE 1—ESTIMATES HEARINGS 2023

Area of Responsibility	Ministers	Hearing Times
ECONOMIC AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE—1 AUGUST 2023		
<p>Queensland Parliament</p> <p>Premier and Cabinet, Olympics and Paralympic Games</p> <p>Treasury, Trade and Investment</p> <p>Tourism, Innovation and Sport</p>	<p>Premier and Minister for Olympic and Paralympic Games</p> <p>Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment</p> <p>Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement</p>	<p>Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: 9am—9:45am</p> <p>BREAK: 9:45am—10am</p> <p>Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games: 10am—11:45am</p> <p>BREAK: 11:45am—12pm</p> <p>Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games: 12pm—1:30pm</p> <p>BREAK: 1:30pm—2pm</p> <p>Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment: 2pm—4pm</p> <p>BREAK: 4pm—4:15pm</p> <p>Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment: 4:15pm—6pm</p> <p>BREAK: 6pm—6:30pm</p> <p>Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement: 6:30pm—9pm</p>
STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE—2 AUGUST 2023		
<p>State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning</p>	<p>Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure</p>	<p>Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (State Development): 9am—10am</p> <p>Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Infrastructure and Planning, Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure): 10am—11:15am</p> <p>BREAK: 11:15am—11:30am</p> <p>Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Local Government): 11:30am—12:30pm</p> <p>BREAK: 12:30pm—1:30pm</p>
<p>Agricultural Industry Development, Fisheries and Rural Communities</p> <p>Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water</p>	<p>Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities</p> <p>Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water</p>	<p>Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Agricultural Industry Development and Rural Communities): 1:30pm—3pm</p> <p>BREAK: 3pm—3:15pm</p> <p>Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Fisheries and Forestry): 3:15pm—4:45pm</p> <p>BREAK: 4:45pm—5pm</p> <p>Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water (Water): 5pm—6:30pm</p> <p>BREAK: 6:30pm—6:45pm</p> <p>Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water (Regional Development and Manufacturing): 6:45pm—7:45pm</p>
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE—3 AUGUST 2023		
<p>Education, Industrial Relations and Racing</p>	<p>Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing</p>	<p>Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Education and Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority): 9am—10:30am</p> <p>BREAK: 10:30am—10:45am</p>

Area of Responsibility	Ministers	Hearing Times
Employment, Small Business, Training and Skills Development and Youth Justice	Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice	<p>Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Education and Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority): 10:45am—11:45am</p> <p>BREAK: 11:45am—12:30pm</p> <p>Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Racing): 12:30pm—1pm</p> <p>Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Industrial Relations): 1pm—2pm</p> <p>BREAK: 2pm—2:30pm</p> <p>Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Training and Skills Development): 2:30pm—4pm</p> <p>BREAK: 4pm—4:15pm</p> <p>Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Employment and Small Business): 4:15pm—5:15pm</p> <p>BREAK: 5:15pm—5:30pm</p> <p>Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Youth Justice): 5:30pm—6:45pm</p>
HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE—4 AUGUST 2023		
Health, Mental Health, Ambulance Services and Women	Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women	<p>Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women (Department of Health, Hospital and Health Services, Health Ombudsman): 9am—10:30am</p> <p>BREAK: 10:30am—10:45am</p> <p>Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women (Department of Health, Hospital and Health Services, Queensland Institute of Medical Research, Queensland Mental Health Commission, Health and Wellbeing Queensland, Women): 10:45am—12:15pm</p> <p>BREAK: 12:15pm—12:30pm</p> <p>Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women (Queensland Ambulance Services): 12:30pm—1:30pm</p> <p>BREAK: 1:30pm—2:30pm</p>
Environment, Great Barrier Reef, Science and Multicultural Affairs	Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs	<p>Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Multicultural Affairs (Environment and the Great Barrier Reef): 2:30pm—4:15pm</p> <p>BREAK: 4:15pm—4:30pm</p> <p>Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Multicultural Affairs (Science and Multicultural Affairs): 4:30pm—5:30pm</p>
TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE—8 AUGUST 2023		
Transport, Main Roads and Digital Services Energy, Renewables, Hydrogen, Public Works and Procurement	Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement	<p>Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Transport and Main Roads): 9am—11am</p> <p>BREAK: 11am—11:15am</p> <p>Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Transport and Main Roads and Digital Services): 11:15am—1pm</p> <p>BREAK: 1pm—2pm</p> <p>Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement (Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen): 2pm—3:30pm</p> <p>BREAK: 3:30pm—3:45pm</p> <p>Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement (Public Works and Procurement): 3:45pm—5:15pm</p>

Area of Responsibility	Ministers	Hearing Times
Resources	Minister for Resources	BREAK: 5:15pm—5:30pm Minister for Resources: 5:30pm—7pm BREAK: 7pm—7:15pm Minister for Resources: 7:15pm—8:15pm
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE—9 AUGUST 2023		
Justice and Attorney-General and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Police, Corrective Services, Fire and Emergency Services	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services	Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, and Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Associated Statutory Bodies): 9am—10:30am BREAK: 10:30am—10:45am Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence (Department of Justice and Attorney-General): 10:45am—12:45pm BREAK: 12:45pm—1:30pm Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Police): 1:30pm—2:45pm BREAK: 2:45pm—3pm Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Corrective Services): 3pm—4pm BREAK: 4pm—4:15pm Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Fire and Emergency Services): 4:15pm—5:15pm
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—10 AUGUST 2023		
Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts	Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts	Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts (Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Family Responsibilities Commission): 9am—10:30am BREAK: 10:30am—10:45am
Housing Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services	Minister for Housing Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services	Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts (Communities and Arts): 10:45am—11:45am BREAK: 11:45am—1pm Minister for Housing: 1pm—2:30pm BREAK: 2:30pm—2:45pm Minister for Housing: 2:45pm—3:45pm BREAK: 3:45pm—4pm Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services (Seniors and Disability Services): 4pm—5:15pm BREAK: 5:15pm—5:30pm Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services (Child Safety): 5:30pm—6:45pm

TABLE 2—SCHEDULE 7

Schedule 7—

*omit, insert***“SCHEDULE 7—CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**

In accordance with Standing Order 181(c), the following table lists entities to which direct questioning of Chief Executives at Estimates is to apply.

**Entities to which direct questioning of
Chief Executives at Estimates is to apply**

Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Art Gallery
Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Audit Office
Central West Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Building and Construction Commission
Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority (Seqwater)
CleanCo Queensland Limited	Queensland Competition Authority
Coordinator-General	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority
Crime and Corruption Commission	Queensland Electricity Transmission Corporation Limited (Powerlink)
Cross River Rail Delivery Authority	Queensland Family and Child Commission
CS Energy Limited	Queensland Human Rights Commission
Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Institute of Medical Research
Electoral Commission of Queensland	Queensland Mental Health Commission
Energy and Water Ombudsman	Queensland Museum
Energy Queensland Limited	Queensland Performing Arts Centre / Queensland Performing Arts Trust
Family Responsibilities Commission	Queensland Racing Integrity Commission
Far North Queensland Ports Corporation Limited (Ports North)	Queensland Rail
GasFields Commission	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
Gladstone Ports Corporation Limited	Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority
Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service	Queensland Theatre Company
Gold Coast Waterways Authority	Queensland Treasury Corporation
Health and Wellbeing Queensland	Racing Queensland
Land Access Ombudsman	Residential Tenancies Authority
Legal Aid Queensland	Resources Safety and Health Queensland
Mackay Hospital and Health Service	Screen Queensland Pty Ltd
Metro North Hospital and Health Service	South Bank Corporation
Metro South Hospital and Health Service	South West Hospital and Health Service
Motor Accident Insurance Commission	Stadiums Queensland
National Injury Insurance Agency, Queensland	Stanwell Corporation Limited
Nominal Defendant	State Library of Queensland / Library Board of Queensland
North Queensland Bulk Ports Corporation Limited	Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service
North West Hospital and Health Service	Sunwater Limited
Office of Inspector General Emergency Management	TAFE Queensland
Office of the Governor	The Public Trustee of Queensland
Office of the Health Ombudsman	Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service
Office of the Information Commissioner	Tourism and Events Queensland
Office of the Integrity Commissioner	Townsville Hospital and Health Service
Office of the Queensland Ombudsman	Trade and Investment Queensland
Office of the Work Health and Safety Prosecutor	West Moreton Hospital and Health Service
Port of Townsville Limited	Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service”
Prostitution Licensing Authority	
Public Sector Commission	
QIC Limited	

The motion before the House is relatively straightforward. It sets out the dates and times for each of the public hearings for the estimates process for the 2023-24 budget. Members will be no stranger to this motion. The government has moved this motion in the past to establish the time frames for each of the estimate's sessions, and I know that there are people in this chamber against this process. However, in doing so, it means that the House has oversight of the estimates process—a process which, in and of itself, is a delegated function of this chamber because committees are a creature of the Legislative Assembly.

Our estimates committees provide a powerful check-and-balance system on the executive government of the day because, as we all know as legislators as members of the Queensland parliament, we all have an obligation to hold the government of the day to account regarding the supply of public funds. The role of the non-government members in this process is vital. It is important because without them there is no effective tool to hold the governments of the day to account. Our government values the democratic system, and that is why we relish in the opportunity to attend estimates—to discuss the financial matters of our respective portfolios and to explain to Queenslanders how the expenditure of their funds is assisting and helping them.

To further enhance this process, in May 2011 the Parliament of Queensland (Reform and Modernisation) Amendment Bill was passed which modernised the estimates committee process and also allowed for the relevant chief executive officers of statutory authorities and departments to be called to answer questions about their respective portfolio matters. These were all-important changes and changes which are still in practice today to enable members of parliament, in particular non-government members, the chance to question the executive on the expenditure.

While I am on the topic of expenditure, it is timely to remind ourselves of what the chairperson of each committee states at the commencement of the hearings. Before the minister usually commences their opening statements, the chair of the committee puts the question—that is, that the proposed expenditure be agreed to. Why do they do that? Because the estimates process is about the expenditure of the government. It is about the finances; it is about the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill. It is not Senate estimates. It is not a public free-for-all hearing. Estimates hearings are about the expenditure of government, and questions should always be related to the expenditure rather than frivolous gotcha questions or grandstanding moments by committee members or visiting members of parliament on the day.

It is interesting to note that on more than one occasion the members of the committees, in particular those on the non-government side, do not really engage in the hearings that much. They sit back and defer to the shadow minister, who generally waltzes on in and, in most cases, tries to make a spectacle of themselves and the hearing. All they want to do, it seems, is get their gotcha line up and their face on the TV. Who could forget the year that a certain member of the opposition turned up to estimates in a shark mask and another time started asking a senior public servant a question about their time at estimates the previous year, all to be embarrassed that it was a completely different person? That is the level of respect that the opposition has for the Public Service. It does not even know the faces and names of the senior public servants it wishes to ask questions of. However, I suppose those opposite like it like that: it is easier to fire them when they come into government because the LNP has form of cutting, sacking and selling.

Turning to the detail of the motion, members will note that there are seven days of estimates hearings—not compressed over a few days like the LNP opposition did when in government. I note the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply speech when he said that one of his first acts is overhauling the estimates process, and I am really eager to hear the detail prior to the election of what that might look like. What does overhauling the estimates process look like?

A government member: We've been there before.

Mrs D'ATH: We have been there before in truncating the estimates process and ensuring that those opposite could not be scrutinised. If it was not enough that they had to deal with an opposition of only eight or nine members at the time, they felt so threatened by that that they had to truncate it so that those shadow spokespersons had to race back and forth across multiple committees over a couple of days and the media could not cover all of them on the same day because of the way that they did it. There would be no level of scrutiny as they took the cameras out of the chamber. They are all about transparency!

While the time allocated for each minister on the whole has not changed, there have been some updates stemming from the recent reshuffle of the cabinet. Of note, the housing portfolio is a standalone portfolio to assist driving housing solutions for Queensland and Queenslanders. As such, this portfolio has been allocated 2½ hours, similar to the other standalone portfolio of resources, which is a larger

proportion of time this year due to the standalone nature of the portfolio. In previous years I have discussed the statistics of the public hearings—something which the Manager of Opposition Business noted last year in his contribution. I am advised that he said during his contribution—

... for example, that 60 per cent of the time was spent by members of the opposition or crossbench asking questions. Actually, 60 per cent of the time was spent by members of the opposition and crossbench asking questions but also by ministers answering questions.

What a groundbreaking statement! Of course the time included the answer, because generally when you ask a question you want to hear the answer. That is the whole point of estimates: the member asks a question and the members of the executive or a public servant answers the question. Pretty simple stuff, but it seems like it is a foreign concept to those opposite.

It would be remiss of me not to take the opportunity to discuss statistics. I am advised that last year 61 per cent of the time was spent on non-government questions and answers and 39 per cent of the time was spent on government questions and answers. I am further advised that, of the total questions asked during the multiple hearings—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mrs D'ATH:—approximately 76 per cent of the questions were non-government questions and 24 per cent were questions by government members. I have to take the interjection from the member for Bonney, who has been removed from his portfolio committee as the shadow environment minister, so I am not quite sure who is going to turn up to that one and ask questions. Will he be allowed to turn up and ask questions?

These statistics show that adequate time is set aside for the various portfolio areas and overwhelmingly non-government members are afforded more time to ask questions and receive the answers. Maybe if they want an enhanced process then those opposite should look at how they conduct themselves and engage in the process.

As we all know, preparing for an estimates process takes time. It involves a number of people and, in particular, our hardworking public servants. While we in this chamber regularly praise and thank our hardworking frontline staff, as we should, we should also thank our non-frontline staff. Those public servants range from the corporate officers and dedicated Smart policy officers to legal experts and everyone in-between. On behalf of the Palaszczuk government, we thank all of our hardworking and dedicated public servants for their support, not only through the estimates process but each and every day, as we all work together on behalf of the people of Queensland for the benefit of all Queenslanders. In addition, I take this opportunity to thank in advance the Parliamentary Service staff, the attendants and the committee staff who prepare for and attend the hearings.

Members will note that this motion includes minor updates to schedule 7 to reflect updated position titles. With those few words, I commend the motion to the House and encourage all members to support the motion.