



Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (Parliament) Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.35 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Economics and Governance Committee report titled *2023-24 Budget Estimates—Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023*, which is the report regarding the appropriations for the parliament. I note that the committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure be agreed to by this Assembly and I thank them for their careful consideration of this matter. I also take the opportunity to thank the member for Greenslopes for his continued execution of the role of Speaker while holding the position of Acting Speaker.

Before I go to other matters that were before the committee I will very briefly touch on what the member for Mermaid Beach just touched on in relation to costs and matters before the High Court currently. I note that although there are concerns about the cost expended on defending the laws that this parliament makes, I never heard such a line of questioning when it came to how much was spent defending our donation laws on property developers in the Supreme Court and the High Court which were taken by executive members and members of the LNP; or, for that matter, the High Court matter in relation to COVID and border closures and how much had to be expended defending our decisions to keep people safe and alive in which the Commonwealth LNP intervened and spent taxpayers' dollars on. But I digress.

Having not witnessed firsthand the hearing, I did read the transcript with interest and was not surprised when the deputy chair of the committee ceded his question to the current Manager of Opposition Business who asked procedural questions, questions which could have been answered by reading the standing and sessional orders or even transcripts of previous years estimates. I note that questions were asked about questions on notice. It has to be said that all questions which are asked on notice are answered by the government. While non-government members may not like the answers they receive, answers are provided by ministers to questions asked and ministers have a right to question whether those questions on notice are in line with the standing orders. We have every right to do so.

I note with interest that the current Manager of Opposition Business asked about the Coaldrake report and the committee system. It should be noted that no specific recommendation about the committee system was provided for in the report, something the Clerk mentioned when he said—

... the Coaldrake review made it pretty clear that its mandate did not extend to looking at the committee system ...

I raise this issue because it is extremely bizarre when it was those opposite, in particular the current Manager of Opposition Business who was a cabinet minister in the Newman government, who trashed the estimates committee process during their time in government when they used their huge majority to squash the ability for the then very small opposition to ask questions and hold the government to account by reducing it to just a couple of days, as we heard earlier in question time. With multiple hearings occurring on the same day, the non-government members had to rush between the various hearings to question the executive in what I can only assume was a considered and purposeful decision by the then LNP Newman government to stifle democracy and limit the ability for them to be held to account. We have heard the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite say they want to reform estimates. Their past performance is extremely scary for the future of our democracy. If those opposite ever get their hands back on the Treasurer tiller and sit on the treasury benches who knows what they would do to not only our democratic institution but also the people of Queensland.

We all know that facts speak for themselves. I want to take a brief minute to talk about some facts. I have been advised that approximately 1,384 questions were asked across the duration of the estimates hearings, with approximately 22 per cent asked by government members and 78 per cent asked by non-government members. I am further advised, based on information provided by the parliament, that approximately 1,131 minutes were used by government members to ask questions and approximately 1,845 minutes were used by non-government members to ask questions. The statistics indicate that the system is working and that non-government members are getting more time to ask questions.

Also, while I do not agree with the assertions or claims by the Leader of the Opposition and his team, I am advised that he released a series of tweets claiming that they found out various things during the estimates hearings, which I am also advised are reflected in various statements of reservation. It goes to show that those on the other side do in some way believe that the system is working if they purport to have had revealed certain things during estimates.

I could talk about this all day but I know that time is limited and I want to take this opportunity to thank all the chairs of the various committees for their work in chairing what is probably one of the more robust meetings of the yearly schedule. I thank committee members from right across the chamber for their work. I know that the ministers appear for a few hours but, of course, the committee members are there for the entire duration and I thank them. I thank the parliamentary committee staff, the attendants and all the staff on the precinct for their work not only during the committee process but each and every day. I commend the report to the House.