



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation (Parliament) Bill**

**Cost of Living and Economics Committee, Report**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.14 pm): I, too, rise to make a short contribution to consideration of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. It is normally a rather dry affair, but this year we uncovered a number of interesting facts that I will come to in a moment. At the outset, I also thank Mr Speaker, the Clerk of the Parliament and all of the parliamentary staff for the amazing job they do in maintaining the democratic function of the institution of parliament and in supporting our roles as members of parliament through our electorate offices and staff.

I come back to what we uncovered at the hearing. Firstly, we discovered evidence of CFMEU activity and bullying here on the parliamentary precinct. I asked the Clerk of the Parliament whether there had been any incidents during the renovation of the Annexe here at Parliament House and whether staff had felt threatened or intimidated by any workers or subcontractors operating on that project. The answer was—

There was an incident very early in the project. It occurred around the same time as regional parliament was occurring in Cairns. We had the intention initially to establish a tradies cafe on level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe which would service all of the contractors on site during the course of the refurbishment. Whilst we were in Cairns for the regional sitting it came to my attention—

that is, the Clerk—

that there had been some verbal stouthing with some of our staff up on level 7—that is, our catering staff—and so I directed that the cafe be shut and it was never reopened.

I went on to ask whether any action had been taken against the individuals who undertook that threatening or intimidating behaviour, other than simply shutting the cafe. The Clerk went to say—

The incident involved what I would call a verbal altercation, if you like. It did not get to any criminal stage so there was no criminal complaint. There were discussions with the contractors about the fact that we were shutting it up because of the activities of the people at the time and I am unaware of what other action has taken place.

Then I asked simply—

Were you aware if the members involved were members of the CFMEU?

The Clerk replied—

I am aware that they were, yes.

Even this institution of parliament is not exempt from the intimidating behaviour of the CFMEU.

We also heard that ministers Ryan, Scanlon and Fentiman—the ministers for police, housing and health—are repeat offenders when it comes to responding in time or appropriately to questions on notice. Alarming, we unearthed that the total cost of the Supermarket Pricing Select Committee was \$153,681. That is nearly \$154,000 to tell the government to keep doing what they are doing. That is an outrageous amount of money for what was nothing other than a PR exercise—

**Mr Janetzki:** A vanity project.

**Mr POWELL:** A vanity project—I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba South—from this Premier, who has lost his way and certainly has lost the support of the people of Queensland.

Page 1 of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland Service Delivery Statements states—

Our purpose is to independently support, promote and strengthen the Parliament to fulfil its democratic functions.

In 2024-25, the Parliamentary Service will work towards its objectives to:

- support the Legislative Assembly (and its committees and Members) in fulfilling its functions within the institution of Parliament

Our parliamentary officers must be increasingly alarmed at the ongoing diminution of respect for the institution of parliament occurring under this increasingly desperate Labor government. We did not get the opportunity to debate the business program motion this morning but, when it comes to the democratic functions mentioned in the SDS, it should be noted, despite increasing sitting hours this week, the government is set to push through about nine bills.

The SDS goes on to talk about the need to ‘safeguard, promote and strengthen the important institution of parliament’. It is hard to do that when three bills have been introduced and debated urgently in about 40 minutes. Those bills have not been subject to committee examination or public consultation. There is no strengthening of the important institution of parliament when bills are regularly amended by amendments irrelevant to the bill being considered. Indeed, whole bills are regularly passed as amendments to irrelevant bills. Our parliamentary officers may strive to ensure our democratic foundations are safeguarded, promoted and strengthened, but this tired, third-term Labor government are turning this House into a legislative sausage machine. They are showing new levels of disrespect for parliament, disrespect for the committee system and disrespect for Queensland.

Page 1 of the SDS lists a key deliverable this year being to prepare for the transition from the 57th Parliament to the 58th Parliament following the scheduled election. I say to the people of Queensland: you have an opportunity to ensure this Labor government, which disrespects the institution of parliament, is shown the door at the October state election and elect a Crisafulli LNP government that will restore the democratic functions of this vital institution.