



Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee, Report

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (8.57 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the 2024-25 budget estimates report No. 16 of the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee. This estimates committee process was marked with the efforts of concealment rather than transparency of the financial credentials. This state and its people are faced with a cost-of-living crisis, a health crisis, a crime crisis and a housing crisis. Contributing to the cost-of-living crisis is that of rising insurance costs and the ongoing disaster events across the state.

Insurance costs have risen some 18 per cent in just 12 months under this minister's watch. Disappointingly when asked if the Disaster Ready Fund projects were assessed to ascertain if they would drive down the cost of insurance in the respective communities, the committee was advised that the projects only impact insurance over time. There is no sense of urgency from this Labor government in relation to the cost-of-living impacts that are happening across this state and it is really cold comfort for those who either cannot source insurance or cannot afford the cost of insurance. I am sure consumers would like to hear that their taxpayers' funds are being directed to projects that drive down the cost of insurance in the shortest possible timeframe, because we know that insurance costs are increasing rapidly. Sadly, it seems that driving down the cost of insurance is not a priority for this Labor government.

Investing in betterment has not been a priority for successive Labor governments over the past 10 years. Betterment is disaster preparedness and it saves taxpayer funds. For instance, at Gayndah the domestic water intake washed away twice and was rebuilt twice, costing \$4 million. It was then relocated above the local weir, costing \$2.9 million. That infrastructure has continued to function through four more disaster events, saving \$10 million in repair costs. That is a \$10 million saving of taxpayer funds. Investing in betterment helps drive down the cost of living and insurance and reduces the amount of time that individuals and communities are isolated by disaster events. Sadly, betterment does not seem to be a priority for this Labor government.

The estimates committee hearing confirmed once again that this government has not built one flood levee since coming to power a decade ago, despite insurance costs going up by 80 per cent in Queensland since then. There is no shortage of communities across Queensland that need flood levees. One that comes to mind is Burketown. They need a levee around their airport to keep it

operational during and after major flood events. Anyone who has been to Burketown or seen the pictures would well understand that. In that community, being able to use the airport for emergency evacuations is particularly important during flood time.