



Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2024


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee, Report

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (7.21 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the current debate. I want to thank the chair and members of the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee. In particular, I want to thank the secretariat. Twelve hours is a long time for anyone to sit at a table. I know that some other committees sat for a little more than 12 hours. As someone who has spent a bit of time on both sides of the estimates table, I think it is probably easier for those who do two or three hours than it is for those who do 12 hours. It is a busy day and I recognise that it is for all members of this House, even those members who spend time at different hearings. However, it is an important process. The process of estimates is our process in this House. We do not have a senate. This is how we scrutinise the budget. The estimates process is the Queensland process. Therefore, I take a bit of offence when people try to run down that process.

I acknowledge the chair and member for Thuringowa. As we have heard, he allowed well over 80-odd per cent of the time for non-government members to ask questions. I know that following previous estimates hearings that has been a battleground as we went through the reports and debated who got how much time and who should have had what. My observation was certainly that there were a number of times when opposition members did not use their 80-odd per cent as effectively as they probably could have.

I acknowledge the ministers. The three ministers who appeared in front of us were the Minister for Health, the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries, and the Minister for the Environment. All three ministers were well and truly across their briefs. All three ministers have been ministers for a while. It certainly was not their first estimates hearing. I acknowledge their directors-general and all the senior public servants who appeared. Certainly with a portfolio the size of health, that means a big room full of people have come from all over the state.

I acknowledge the amount of work that the public sector and the departments put into estimates preparation. I have seen the amount of work that goes into estimates preparation by a department, with all of the briefings, the folders and getting everything together, taking questions on notice, being prepared for a range of things, bringing in people from all over the state, particularly with very

operational departments such as our emergency services and, in this situation, the health department. Often you will have CEOs of the HHSs sitting in the back of the estimates hearing while still managing their HHS, sometimes by remote control. I acknowledge the work that they do.

As I said, a lot of work goes into the estimates hearings. It is our process. It is the Queensland process. Instead of running it into the ground, members of this House should be supporting it for what is: a truly good opportunity to scrutinise information and to scrutinise the budget. Members opposite got 80-something per cent of the time to ask ministers and directors-general questions for hours and hours. If they can find a better way to scrutinise a portfolio then I am all ears.