



Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**


**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 May 2024

**COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**Report, Motion to Take Note**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.20 pm): As a member of the CLA, one of the august parliamentary committees overseen by the Speaker of the House and one that takes a totally bipartisan approach in terms of our decision-making and reporting, it is a pleasure to speak to the report by the CLA on the estimates process. A big part of the estimates process is the review of the Office of the Speaker, which is very important particularly given the large-scale expenditures happening around the precinct, the timings et cetera.

I have to concur with some of the comments of the member for Hill in relation to the questioning. As referred to by the chair, I was particularly involved in the Economics and Governance Committee, as it was then known. Yes, we probably did have double the amount of time, as the chair of that committee referred to. That was probably because all of the questions that we asked were repeated by the chair, just to make up a bit more time. They were also interpreted by the chair, just to take up a little bit more time. We thank the chair for chewing up half of our time, which meant we ended up with about the same time as government members.

The member for Hill raises a very good point about the questioning from government members. The use of Dorothy Dixers, basically to promote the ministers involved, was the order of the day. While we all want to find out how wonderful the school in Logan is going, surely the member can ask about that in another forum rather than through hard questioning at estimates. Rather than having a lot of media gotcha moments—I did not hear any media gotchas from the government's side—it is important that all of the financial aspects of the budget be examined, which will be particularly important as we move into a harder cost-of-living era in the years ahead. We can see the dark clouds forming now.

The review of last year's estimates hearings highlights the fact that a lot of questioning really was about peripheral issues in the budget. The member for Hill raised a very important matter: similar to question time here in the parliament, the questioning should be about holding the government to account. A previous minister, Rob Schwarten, has said, 'I loved the estimates because I was all over my brief and I'd find out through the questioning about things that were going on within the department that I didn't know and then we could address those matters.' He was a good minister. These days, the Labor side is lacking the type of minister who is right across their brief, takes a lot of advice from their minders et cetera. A good estimates committee is basically good for the government as well. It is not just about bringing down the government; it is about the government finding out about its own shortfalls so it can address them on behalf of the Queensland community. We see those shortfalls more and more.

In relation to statistics—and I think it was mentioned earlier—there are untruths, untruths and statistics. Another word was used originally but that old adage was penned many years ago. You can do anything you want with statistics, but the reality is that the estimates hearings could and should be a better process. As the Manager of Opposition Business mentioned, hopefully it will be a better process for the 2025 estimates. We are not quite sure where we are going in 2024, but it will be an interesting time ahead. Hopefully, we can improve upon our efforts in the 2023 estimates process.