



Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

##### **Appropriation Bill**

##### **Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee, Report**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.34 pm): I rise today to address the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee estimates process. While the opposition does not oppose the passing of the 2024-25 budget, it is crucial to acknowledge the clear limitations and troubling patterns that have emerged under this government's tenure. The estimates process, once again, has been marred by obfuscation and a lack of transparency. Instead of providing the clarity that Queenslanders deserve, the current government continues to shroud its failures. Labor has been in office for nearly a decade and it is concerning that this government has been unable to reassure Queenslanders that its policies are effectively addressing the challenges we face.

From the cost-of-living crisis to the health crisis, the crime crisis and the housing crisis, this government has failed us time and time again. The budget, rather than offering genuine solutions, presents only bandaid measures that fail to address the underlying causes of these issues. Simply directing government funds at problems, many of which have arisen from the government's own actions or inactions, will not provide the long-term solutions Queenslanders need. This budget was an opportunity for the government to chart a new course, to fix the errors of the past and to assure Queenslanders that their concerns would be met with decisive action. Unfortunately, this budget does none of that.

The health crisis continues to worsen under this tired, third-term government. This was evident through the hearings. We have world-class health professionals in Queensland, but the government continues to let them down and no longer listens to them and has not been listening for a long time. In a move that can only be described as evasive, the health minister released only partial hospital performance data for the June quarter the night before the committee hearing. This government spent three-quarters of a billion dollars last year to tackle ambulance ramping, yet ramping remains at nearly 45 per cent across Queensland. Queensland has endured the worst six months of ambulance ramping on record. The minister had committed to reducing ambulance ramping to 28 per cent within 12 months of taking over the portfolio. Not only has that target not been met; ramping is worse than ever.

The minister refused to release performance data for elective surgery and specialist outpatient services. This is the first time that such data has been split in this way, and the only conclusion we can draw is that this was done to avoid scrutiny during the hearing. This follows the trend of shrouding the truth from the public.

The agriculture sector is another area where the government is letting Queenslanders down. The opposition remains deeply concerned about the government's decision to sell off Queensland's agricultural colleges. We raised concerns during the hearing about the successful tender for the former Longreach site which went to a proponent who has no plans to continue the educational component of the site. At a time when skills and labour shortages are crippling Queensland's agricultural industries, this remains a significant concern.

The government's mishandling of the Fire Ant Eradication Program and its inability to engage effectively on issues relevant to rural communities have only added to the uncertainty facing our agricultural sector. The government failed to provide any information on funding of the Sustainable Timber Industry Framework, and this raises serious doubts about whether the government can deliver on its commitments, especially given its failures to deliver on the two-year action plan promised back in 2012.

The hearings have revealed many shortcomings in government policies and little evidence that the government knows how to overcome these challenges. Queenslanders deserve better. Queenslanders deserve a government that is transparent and accountable and delivers on its promises. Queenslanders deserve better than bandaid solutions and political posturing. They deserve a government that is committed to transparency, accountability and effective service delivery. Unfortunately, this budget and this government fall well short of these expectations.