



Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee, Report

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (7.10 pm): I thank the House for providing the opportunity for me to contribute to this debate on the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee's estimates report. Estimates is an important opportunity for members to ask ministers about their portfolios and the proposed expenditure, and there is plenty to talk about when it comes to our record \$28.9 billion investment in Queensland's health system. I want to thank the member for Thuringowa for so expertly chairing proceedings as well as all of the other committee members for their considered questions and contributions.

Queensland Health is one of the biggest agencies within government, and I am so proud of the work that our frontline doctors, nurses, allied health staff, wardies and administrators do every day because, as I said at the hearing, our frontline health heroes deserve backing, not belittling, and support, not scorn. Imagine my surprise when the LNP used estimates to belittle our amazing health workers and spread fear about our world-class system—but, really, the whole thing was like groundhog day. The Leader of the Opposition was there peering over the shoulder of the member for Mudgeeraba the whole time, giving her directions on how to do her job. I have to wonder: is that because he does not trust her or is it because he is planning to sack her from the frontbench if elected in October?

There he sat peering over the top of the member for Mudgeeraba, stuffed with so much repressed anger and ego that he had to interject 19 times when he asked only 12 questions. His anger and rage were palpable every time he did not get the answer he wanted or when his question was ruled out of order. He was spluttering and stuttering, but he still thought he was doing a better job than the member for Mudgeeraba—and I cannot say that I blame him, particularly given her track record in the hearing. After her clanger a few years ago calling health workers 'duds', one would think she maybe would have learned her lesson, but apparently not because she came into estimates and said that our senior doctors and nurses in the state were underperforming.

Let's talk about underperforming. The LNP did not ask a single question about our new nation-leading cancer plan, not one question about our plan to train and retain the workforce and—get this—not one question about women. There was not one question about the Office for Women and what we are doing to make sure women have economic independence in this state. One would think

that, given their issues with women—as in there are hardly any of them—and the Leader of the Opposition’s commitment to have women controlling the state’s economic levers, as he so says, they would at least ask one question about women, but nothing.

What we did hear plenty of during estimates, though, was the whingeing and whining from LNP members that they somehow did not get enough time to ask their questions. As the member for Thuringowa has quite well put, I am advised that across the committee non-government members asked 82 per cent of the questions and had 85 per cent of the total question time, and they still could not ask a relevant question. If that is not enough time for members of the LNP to ask questions of ministers, I do not know how to help them. Not only did they not ask any relevant questions; they called our health workers underperforming and they failed to actually address the issues that affect women and girls in this state.

It is somewhat ironic that the LNP is saying that the estimates process was not transparent enough, given the Leader of the Opposition’s record when it comes to transparency. We have heard about that this week and I have no doubt that we will continue to hear about the Leader of the Opposition’s lack of transparency about his small business record. Despite all of the bluff and bluster from the opposition about transparency, the Leader of the Opposition still refuses to be up-front with Queensland. His latest excuse—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Minister, it is very difficult to be irrelevant in a debate as broad as the estimates, but you are being completely irrelevant in discussing the opposition leader. Please confine your contribution to the bill and the estimates hearing.

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, unlike most committees, the Leader of the Opposition made an appearance at the health committee and failed to ask any relevant questions and instead interrupted 19 times and, as I said, was pointing out to the member for Mudgeeraba what her job was. I would say that the Leader of the Opposition again failed to ask any relevant questions and failed to be transparent and up-front with Queenslanders about what his plan would be for the health system, because he refuses to say what he would do and he refuses to put a dollar on the table for how he would fix some of the pressures our health system is under, so that means we can only judge on his record, which is to cut, sack and sell.