



Speech By
Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (8.05 pm): Firstly, I want to say thank you to the chair of the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee for repeating the chair's forward in the speech that he has just given, because it has already been published in the document that has been tabled which we are talking on today. That is a mammoth effort, chair, so thank you very much for reading into the record that which is already tabled. Well done you for that piece of inventive work.

In all of that rereading of something that has already been written for him and delivered here, the member for Toohey's foreword to the report is more instructive for what it does not say than what the report itself does say. In this report it is clear that the government has totally ignored the responses to both questions on notice and questions at the committee hearing. Firstly, we got the absurdity of the CCC having to pay the legal costs for long time Labor mate Peter Carne's appeal to the High Court to prevent a report by the CCC into his stewardship of the Public Trustee being made public. How much did all of that cost? A million dollars in legal fees: \$943,993. You will not find that in the report. This included two sums paid in relation to Mr Carne, firstly for the Court of Appeal and secondly in relation to the High Court proceedings. The CCC's own legal costs were \$503,000. As I said, Madam Deputy Speaker, you will not find those numbers in the report.

Another number you will not find in the report is the cost payable to former Labor MP Jackie Trad. Let's not forget the CCC conducted an investigation into the appointment of the then under-treasurer Mr Frankie Carroll beginning almost four years ago. That report has not seen the light of day. Let's also not forget that Ms Trad was granted indemnity by her own Labor mates—not to defend an action, but instead to commence an action to silence the CCC—and not by one Labor MP, not even by two, but by three Labor ministers. Former premier Palaszczuk, former attorney-general Fentiman and soon-to-be former member D'Ath at three separate times have approved or extended paying those fees. Let's not ignore, as the member for Kawana often tells us, the very recent reliable reports of last week's meeting at the AMWU headquarters in Roma Street of at least part of the left faction on that side of the parliament to plot a replacement for the poor old member for Murrumba. He is not even in his political grave and who is out apparently wargaming a leadership tussle: Jackie Trad, Julie-Ann Campbell and AMWU boss Rohan Webb. Is it too much to say there is some connection there?

Mr KELLY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am not sure whether it is too much to ask about that connection, but I think there should be a connection to the bill so I would ask that you rule on relevance in relation to this contribution.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member for Clayfield, you have strayed somewhat. If you could come back to the estimates and the bill, that would be great.

Mr NICHOLLS: What we know from the chair of the CCC's very proper answers to questions is that, despite offers being made backwards and forwards to settle Ms Trad's costs with a counteroffer on 29 April and three follow-up inquiries, there has been no response. What was the comment from Mr Barbour in response to my question? Here is what the transcript said. Mr Barbour responded, 'Can I say I share your frustration.' There has been no resolution of this matter despite almost a third of the year.

Another word that got a lot of airtime during estimates was 'frustration'—frustration in relation to the inability to prepare reports, frustration in the inability to carry out investigations. If there was one thing that came through, it was frustration. That frustration went beyond the CCC and its investigations. It also went to the chair of the Family and Child Commission, who also expressed frustration in his ability to carry out his work. He was very fulsome in terms of what he said was working and what was not working. What he said was not working was the current government's plan of only monitoring kids for three days when they are exiting detention. What was very clear in his answer was support for the LNP's program to support children for 12 months after they exit detention, at a cost of \$175 million.

In the second round of questions, we exposed the farce that is the Labor government's so-called commitment to implementing the recommendations from the *A call for change* report by Judge Richards. Since that report has been delivered, virtually no action has been taken. Again, we found out from Mr Barbour that he had only been informed the day before of the consideration of the formulation of the members of a committee to consider implementing it—a year after the report was delivered. We are no clearer to having a semblance of an idea of when the DNA debacle presided over by this government will come to an end. There were no clear answers as to when that will occur. The estimates were revealing for what this government has failed to do. This report is the same.