




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; GOVERNANCE, ENERGY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE, REPORT

 **Ms ASIF** (Sandgate—ALP) (12.08 pm): I rise today in consideration of the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee report No. 11, *2025-26 Budget estimates—Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2025*. I would like to thank the Speaker, the Clerk and the parliamentary staff who assisted with the hearing of the committee.

The estimates process is about bringing transparency and accountability to the budget process and the process of making decisions in government. It is a way to hold the government to account and it provides an opportunity to scrutinise not just the expenditure of taxpayer funds but the integrity of the democratic institutions that we stand in today. What we uncovered in this process raised serious questions about accountability and transparency and whether this government truly understands the meaning of democratic reforms.

Let us talk about ministerial accountability. It seems there is none. This government promised to treat parliament with respect, yet their actions tell a very different story. Our prehearing questions revealed that 17 per cent of questions on notice of the LNP government had been answered late and that 17 ministers actually failed to meet their basic parliamentary obligation to answer questions from elected representatives. Top of the ladder is the Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, who has not answered 38 per cent of questions. Then we have the Minister for Housing and Minister for Youth, with 35 per cent of questions unanswered. You would think that asking questions of the housing minister was important and that the answers should be noted, but we have not received them. Next is the Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support, with 34 per cent of questions unanswered. I could go on and on. Every single one of these ministers has a duty to Queenslanders that requires them to answer questions about the decisions they are making—decisions which impact vulnerable people in our communities. When ministers routinely ignore their obligations to parliament, they ignore their obligations to the people of Queensland and the people who elect them.

During the election campaign the then opposition leader, now Premier, said that he would hold his ministers to account and that he would not tolerate incompetence. My question to the Premier is: does that still stand? Will you be sacking the 17 ministers who have failed their basic obligations to answer these questions? This is about accountability. When ministers routinely ignore their obligations, they are ignoring their responsibilities.

We saw parliamentary debate being shortened. This is another concerning trend. The LNP government has guillotined debate on over 11 occasions, cutting debates short. They have moved that questions during consideration in detail be denied, leaving members unable to ask questions on issues that matter to Queenslanders. This is the same party that when in opposition criticised such practices and promised to do better. The hypocrisy is staggering.

Another troubling revelation unveiled during the committee process was in relation to aircraft use. We heard evidence that a taxpayer-funded charter flight was diverted at the request of a non-committee member who was seated in the copilot seat while the plane was redirected near his property. The same

member has potential interests affected by the very legislation the committee was examining. The cost of this charter was a staggering \$13,842. This leaves more questions than answers. How much extra did the taxpayer pay for the diversion of this aircraft? More importantly, what does it say about the integrity of our committee process when non-government members can influence publicly funded travel for their own personal benefit?

Let's reflect on the estimates process itself. The government promised revolutionary reform, yet we only saw Dorothy Dixers to limit the time of those who needed to ask questions—the opposition. During the process we saw the Leader of the House make 212 points of order—a 26 per cent rate.

Dr Rowan interjected.

Ms ASIF: The Leader of the House agrees. He is saying he is only doing his job. Well, he did his job successfully—successfully running a protection racket of ministers who were incompetent and were not able to answer the questions being asked of them.

The people of Queensland deserve better. They deserve a government that honours its commitment, respects parliamentary processes and understands that accountability is not just a campaign slogan; it is a fundamental democratic principle. The Labor opposition will continue to hold this government to account and will continue to ask the hard questions. We will continue to fight for the transparency and accountability that Queenslanders were promised but are yet to receive.

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member, I am advised by the table that you may have used some unparliamentary language. It would assist the House if you would please withdraw.

Ms ASIF: I withdraw.