




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; JUSTICE,
INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (6.23 pm): What Queenslanders saw in this year's budget estimates was not accountability, it was not transparency and it certainly was not the fresh start the Crisafulli LNP promised to Queenslanders. What we saw was protection of their ministers. Even the *Courier-Mail* called it out: LNP insiders admitted that the Leader of the House was running a 'heavy protection cordon' around ministers. We saw it for ourselves. Every time the questions got uncomfortable, there was the Leader of the House interjecting, directing the chair and chewing up valuable time. This was not scrutiny; it was a cover-up. It was a government hiding behind points of order, shielding its ministers and doing everything it could to avoid the truth.

Nowhere was that clearer than during the scrutiny of the police portfolio. Right at the start of questioning, the Acting Police Commissioner confirmed something extraordinary: that the member for Nicklin—an LNP MP, a former police officer and chair of the justice committee—was attending practice estimates with the minister and the commissioner. Let's be clear: these are supposed to be closed door sessions. They are for ministers and senior departmental officials—not for backbenchers and not for politicians trying to manage the optics. In those meetings, sensitive topics are on the table—operational matters, intelligence, counterterrorism, ethical standards—yet an LNP MP was right there in the room taking part.

Then in the hearing itself that same MP jumped with points of order to shut down questions about what he had been doing. He tried to block Labor from exposing the truth. When that failed, the acting commissioner confirmed that, yes, the member for Nicklin was present and probably at multiple sessions. This goes to the very heart of integrity in Queensland. The line between police and politics must be crystal clear, and the LNP have blurred that completely. That is not oversight; that is interference. What happened when we pushed on it? The government shut it down and handed the next question to the member for Nicklin himself and, like clockwork, the commissioner delivered a pre-prepared answer on the Premier's travel, full of cherrypicked stats to cover the government's tracks. This is not a coincidence; it is coordination and protection of the minister in plain sight of everyone at estimates.

While the LNP played games with the process, what did we learn about substance? We learnt that this government has delivered the lowest base rate police pay rise in the nation. Documents tabled by the opposition show it clearly: in New South Wales, a minimum of 19 per cent increases; in Victoria, up to 20 per cent; and in South Australia, eight per cent over two years, plus salary increases. What do we have here in Queensland? We have a deal that leaves our officers at the bottom, personally negotiated by the Premier and the minister—an insult to the frontline workers. We listened to the police minister tonight claiming that as part of the negotiations they are funding new tasers, breathalysers and other operational equipment. That is not what an EBA is about; it is about the wages and conditions of the workforce, including our amazing police.

Attrition numbers in police in Queensland are exploding. Last year alone, 709 officers left the Queensland Police Service, and projections show that more than 800 could walk away by 2029.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Order! Members on my right and member for Ferny Grove!

Mr BUTCHER: This government's so-called pipeline of 1,600 new recruits is just spin. There is no additional funding beyond what Labor had already committed. There is no substance and no plan.

The real insult to Queenslanders came when we followed the money and discovered just how far the Premier is willing to go for his own comfort. More than half a million dollars was spent in jet flights, with a single day costing over \$50,000. This is all while ministers try to downplay crime stats and pretend things are under control here in Queensland. This is a Premier flying high while Queenslanders are left behind with fewer police, rising crime and services that are under pressure.

I turn to the Corrective Services space, and I was glad to hear the minister finally fire up tonight. That is what I was expecting during estimates, but she failed to deliver. She dodged questions and she weaved questions. She gave every answer but the ones that Queenslanders deserve. She is a minister who is incapable of doing her job.