




Speech By  
**James Martin**

**MEMBER FOR STRETTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; PRIMARY INDUSTRIES AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE, REPORT**

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.51 pm): I want to start today by thanking Queensland's hardworking public servants. Each and every day across our state they deliver the services that we all rely on. Without them, our hospitals, our schools and our frontline services in our communities could not function. Also, without them, a lot of LNP ministers would look even worse than they already do. In particular, I want to acknowledge the extraordinary effort that goes into preparing for the budget estimates process. Hundreds of staff spend weeks compiling briefing notes for ministers, collating data and ensuring transparency. Their job is made so much harder by this government, which is focused on dodging security.

Estimates should be about genuine scrutiny and accountability, not a process deliberately designed to reduce questioning or interrupted or interfered with by endless points of order taken by the member for Moggill. In fact, during the Primary Industries and Resources Committee estimates hearing, the only thing more distracting than the endless points of order taken by the member for Moggill was the thousands of angry teachers protesting out the front. They certainly made themselves heard to the committee. During the middle of deliberations it was hard to hear the questions and the answers. It is sad, though, that the LNP and this government are not listening to teachers.

This year's estimates revealed deep problems within the Crisafulli LNP government. Before even turning to policy, it is clear that Queenslanders were promised accountability, transparency, honesty and respect for taxpayer dollars but are being delivered the opposite. The government claimed it would strengthen scrutiny, yet it has abolished the 70-30 rule. It promised integrity but shamelessly operates in secrecy, deceit, obfuscation and deflection.

First, on the issue of progressive coal royalties, Queenslanders deserve certainty about a revenue stream that funds our hospitals, our schools and our infrastructure, yet when asked directly whether those royalties would continue beyond 2028—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr MARTIN:** I would think a lot of their backbenchers might want to know as well. When asked if the progressive coal royalties would continue beyond 2028, the minister washed his hands of responsibility. Instead of providing a straight answer, he deferred to the Treasurer. At the very same time, industry stakeholders were being told in private that a new deal was on the table. This doublespeak undermines investment certainty and the state's fiscal credibility. Most importantly, if the LNP will not continue progressive coal royalties beyond 2028, what services will be cut from the budget? Will it be hospitals, schools, roads or 50-cent fares? Queenslanders need to know. It is disappointing that they refused to answer.

Second, we learned that the government has been handing out consulting contracts to party donors. Mr Ian Davies, a recent donor to the LNP, was awarded \$187,500 for a contract of just 25 days

work. It is certainly a good job if you can get it. However, you will not be able to get it unless you are a close mate of the LNP. When asked what expertise he brought to the issues around Mount Isa and base metals, the director-general could not provide an answer. Queenslanders were promised respect for taxpayers' money. Instead they are getting cushy consulting gigs for LNP insiders. It is part of a broader problem. Senior roles and lucrative contracts are going to those with political connections, not those best placed to serve Queensland.

Third, we saw the government caught flat-footed on the future of the Mount Isa copper smelter.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr O'Shea): One moment, member for Stretton. There is too much background noise.

**Mr MARTIN:** We saw the government caught flat-footed on the future of the Mount Isa copper smelter. This is the lifeblood of Western Queensland, supporting thousands of jobs and underpinning our critical minerals sector. The government has known about the risk of closure since February, yet it came to estimates with no plan, no accountability and no answers for workers. Queenslanders were promised leadership and honesty but, instead, workers were met with silence and secrecy. Even worse, they chose to cut the Collaborative Exploration Initiative, a program that gave smaller explorers the chance to advance projects in critical minerals. The industry itself has said that this decision risks driving investment away from Queensland.

In manufacturing, we saw the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program hit delays. That is a project Labor established to create jobs in Maryborough and Torbanlea and to build the trains that Queenslanders so desperately need. The minister's statements were inconsistent with his own director-general's evidence, and the public was left none the wiser about when those trains will arrive. Once again, officials were told one story while the minister spun another—the hallmark of a government that says one thing in public while doing another behind closed doors.