



Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Arts and Communities Committee

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (4.29 pm): Estimates is supposed to be about accountability. It is about ministers answering questions and giving Queenslanders the transparency they deserve. What we saw from the Minister for Women were refusals to answer, contradictions and a complete lack of action. When asked about access to abortion, an issue of profound importance to women in this state, the minister tried every trick in the book to avoid answering.

Mr LISTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, it appears the member's contribution has ceased.

Ms FENTIMAN: No, I am still going. That was awkward—

Mr LISTER: I seek the call, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I ask for your guidance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Just one moment, member for Southern Downs, while I seek some advice.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs—

Ms PEASE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the actions and words of the member for Southern Downs and I ask him to withdraw. Might I also add—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you may not add, member for Lytton, because I am in the midst of making a ruling on another point of order. I have heard your subsequent point of order. I would ask that you just resume your seat for the moment. I am going to make a ruling on the first point of order. I will then come to your point of order. If you have another matter after that, we will proceed with that.

Ms PEASE: My point of order is one whole—

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, I have asked you to resume your seat. You are now warned. I gave you a very direct instruction just then and you continued to speak. You are warned under the standing orders.

Member for Southern Downs, I have heard your point of order and your seeking of the call. I have sought advice. The member for Waterford had not resumed her seat. Her microphone was still on. I will ask the member for Waterford to continue her contribution in a moment.

Member for Southern Downs, the member for Lytton has taken offence at comments. I am not sure what they were, but she has taken offence. I did hear you say something. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr LISTER: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, do you have another point of order?

Ms PEASE: I did. May I make that order of order?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may.

Ms PEASE: I was threatened by the member for Southern Downs.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will seek some advice around that. That is a matter of privilege. As the Speaker has given guidance to the House, the proper process for that is to write to him about those matters. Member for Waterford, continue with your contribution.

Ms FENTIMAN: It was a very long, awkward pause, but I did not even get to the 17 seconds—thanks to the member for Southern Downs—that the Minister for Women took to finally answer my question in the estimates committee. The question was simply, ‘What public statements have you made about abortion and a woman’s right to choose?’ There was a long, very uncomfortable silence, and only then did she read a note scribbled from her chief of staff. It was appalling. It was embarrassing. The Minister for Women could not tell Queensland women where she stands on a woman’s right to choose. Even after that really awkward silence and the chief of staff finally scribbling something and passing it to her, she could not bring herself to say to Queensland women where she is on the record. Let me just remind you all that she voted to keep abortion a crime in this state. She also voted against expanding access to termination drugs for women in rural and regional Queensland. What is clear is that the Minister for Women is doing nothing to advance the rights of women when it comes to their reproductive health.

What else became abundantly clear through estimates was that women’s economic security is clearly at the bottom of this minister’s to do list. It is so far down her list that she forgot she even chaired the women’s economic security team. I am not making this up. This is not trivia. The women’s economic security team is supposed to be driving women’s economic security, tackling the gender pay gap and ensuring women can participate fully in the economy. If the minister has to be told by her chief of staff whether she chairs a team or not, then it is pretty clear she is not leading it. The *Courier-Mail* agrees. They reported that the minister appeared to be reading notes, at first insisting that the Treasurer chaired the team and then backtracking again after her staff scribbled the correction. Even more extraordinary is that her admission was later airbrushed from the official *Hansard* record. I table the *Courier-Mail* article titled ‘Who is the chair?’

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, undated, titled ‘Who’s the Chair?’ [1138](#).

When the minister delivered rehearsed answers to her own Dorothy Dixers, all she wanted to talk about were serious allegations of women being harassed at work by the CFMEU. Let me be clear that sexual harassment is never okay, but let’s not pretend this was about the women. If the Minister for Women was a genuine advocate for the workplace safety of women and girls in this state, if she truly wanted to end sexual harassment in the workplace, then where was her advocacy when her own government indefinitely paused respect at work laws to keep workers in this state safe from sexual harassment? Where was her advocacy when women stood up and called out the government for this behaviour? Whether it is women’s safety at work or women’s economic security, this minister and the LNP government are failing Queensland women.

It is not just about her poor performance at estimates: it reflects the weakness of their policies. They like to claim they have suddenly woken up to the fact that women here in Queensland can vote, but I think the women of Queensland see through this. The truth is that the LNP is not serious about closing the gender pay gap. They are not serious about supporting women to return to work. This minister is responsible for one new policy: supporting women back into the workforce. There is no start date, there are no guidelines and there is no information. What has she been doing for nine months? They are not serious about driving real reform. They are not serious about closing the gender pay gap, and they are not serious about gender equality because those words have been airbrushed from the SDS. Suddenly it is 2025 and gender equality is a little bit too controversial for the LNP government. It was an embarrassing performance by an embarrassing minister.