

Speech By

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

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (11.59 am): I rise as a member of the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee to support the adoption of report No. 27 on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2026. Having participated in the estimates hearing, I begin by acknowledging the Speaker, the Clerk and the many Parliamentary Service staff who support this institution. As a relatively new member of this House, one thing you quickly come to appreciate is just how much happens behind the scenes to allow this parliament to function. The Parliamentary Service supports 93 members, the chamber, the committees, Hansard, the Parliamentary Library, electorate offices and the many systems and services that allow us to represent our community. Most of that work occurs without fanfare, but without it this institution simply cannot function.

Estimates is a good example of that. It is an important part of parliamentary accountability. It gives members the opportunity to examine proposed expenditure, question ministers and officials and scrutinise the performance of government. Importantly, it also allows Queenslanders to see scrutiny taking place publicly. As somebody who participated in estimates hearings for the first time this year, I certainly gained a greater appreciation for the work done by the Speaker, the Clerk, committee secretariats, Hansard and Parliamentary Service staff to make that process work.

There is another aspect of the Parliamentary Service that I particularly want to acknowledge; that is, the work being done to make parliament accessible to Queenslanders outside of Brisbane. This parliament does not belong to the people who sit in this chamber; it belongs to the people of Queensland, and Queensland is a very big state. For somebody living on the Cassowary Coast, in the Herbert River region or in the northern suburbs of Townsville, Parliament House can feel a long way away geographically, but institutionally it should never be. That is why the parliament's regional education and engagement program is so important. Taking parliamentary programs into regional communities gives Queenslanders—particularly young Queenslanders—the opportunity to better understand how their parliament works, how laws are made and, importantly, how they can participate in our democracy.

The same principle applies to our parliamentary committee system. Committees provide an opportunity for Queenslanders to have a direct say in the work that is being performed by the parliament through submissions, public hearings and inquiries. When committees travel outside of Brisbane—as we do very often—regional Queenslanders have the opportunity to put their views directly to members of parliament. I have seen the value of that firsthand. When people can sit across the table from members of a parliamentary committee and explain what legislation will actually mean for their business, their family, their industry or their community, it brings perspective that cannot always be captured on paper. This is parliamentary democracy working as it should, and the same is true of our electorate offices.

For most Queenslanders, their interaction with this parliament will never involve walking through the doors of this chamber; it will involve walking through the doors of their local electorate office. It might be a farmer concerned about fuel and fertiliser, a family trying to navigate a government service, a community organisation seeking assistance or somebody who simply wants their local member to listen. For those people, their electorate office is their connection to this parliament. In regional Queensland particularly, those offices are quite literally parliament in the community. This is why the people, systems and resources that support electorate offices matter. They allow members and our staff to listen, advocate, connect with services and ensure communities have a voice here in Brisbane.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill may not attract the attention that some of the larger areas of government and expenditure receive, but the institution it supports matters enormously. A strong parliament requires effective scrutiny, it requires public participation, it requires members to be properly supported and it requires Queenslanders—regardless of whether they live in Brisbane, Birdsville, Coolangatta or Cardwell—to know that this parliament belongs to them. I thank the Speaker and the Clerk for their evidence during the estimates hearing. I thank the chair and my fellow members of the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee. Importantly, I thank all of the staff, the committee secretariats, Hansard, the Parliamentary Library staff, the chamber and procedural services, the electorate office support staff, the education and engagement teams and all of the Parliament House employees, particularly the good staff of the Hinchinbrook office. God knows they deserve plenty of thanks because they have to look after me!

The committee has examined the proposed expenditure and recommends that it be agreed to. I support that recommendation. I support a parliament that is accountable, accessible and connected to the people it represents.