



Speech By  
**Dr Christian Rowan**

**MEMBER FOR MOGGILL**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee, Report**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.35 pm): I rise to address the recent budget estimates hearings and Appropriation Bill 2018, specifically that area of responsibility in consideration of the Palaszczuk Labor government's proposed expenditure by the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee. I also make some specific comments on the committee's consideration as they relate to my shadow ministerial portfolio of the arts.

Labor appears to have a lack of interest in market-led proposals for the arts and their associated cost benefit for Queensland. It is clear that the minister and the Labor government have abandoned fostering the market-led proposal by Foundation Theatres for a new \$100 million commercial theatre at a cost of only \$25 million to the taxpayer. This is certainly disappointing to say the least. However, I will acknowledge the commitment of the government to the Backing Indigenous Arts initiative as well as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performing arts sector more generally and specifically via the first round of the Next Stage and Producer Placements funding.

Now more than ever accountability and transparency in Queensland's democracy and democratic processes are paramount. With no upper house, our committee system and budget estimates processes are vital to holding the Labor government to account. Sadly, what we saw throughout this year's budget estimates was a government more focused on avoiding accountability, of hiding behind technicalities and points of order—basically doing all that it could to avoid scrutiny. The minister's time before the committee was ashamedly littered with the Labor chair time and time again dictating opposition questions as either being out of order or threatening to rule questions as being out of order and ultimately protecting the minister when questions became a little too tough. The people of Queensland deserve better.

When it came to the scrutiny of the minister's responsibility for environment, science and the Great Barrier Reef, the minister was found wanting. As my LNP colleagues the member for Scenic Rim and the member for Whitsunday rightly highlighted in their statement of reservation, the opposition's questioning of an environmental protection order for Baal Gammon Copper became too much for this minister and she had to rely on the protection of her Labor chair.

Let us take another example from this year's estimates. After the LNP uncovered details of more than 100 koalas being killed as a result of the Queensland Labor government policy, the Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef could not rule out similar government translocation mass mortality events occurring again. True to form, however, while running short on answers and accountability, this Labor government is more than happy to defer to yet more government reports and consultative committees rather than making any real decisions.

Perhaps the most poignant example of this minister and her Labor government's disdain for the hardworking people of Queensland is the effort it has gone to to implement its big new waste tax—a tax that this minister has mishandled right from the start as she forces it on to every single Queenslanders. Let us not forget that this waste tax is nothing short of a cash grab—a \$1.3 billion cash grab that Labor did not take to the people of Queensland at the last election.

In language that would make George Orwell proud, report No. 5 of the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee, issued following the committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2018-19 financial year, listed as the first highlight the first priority of the Department of Environment and Science as being 'to lead the development of a comprehensive new waste strategy for Queensland underpinned by a waste disposal levy that will have no direct impact on households'.

The Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef should tell that to the small businesses of Queensland and their loyal customers who have just been saddled with a new \$1.3 billion tax. In my remaining time, I want to thank the minister for her attendance and all members of the committee who were there on the day. I acknowledge the committee secretariat and all the staff for their hard work.