



Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

**Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee, Report**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.12 pm): I rise to address the recent budget estimates hearings and the Appropriation Bill 2019, specifically that area of responsibility in consideration of the Palaszczuk Labor government's proposed expenditure by the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee. I will also address the committee's consideration as it pertains to my shadow ministerial portfolio of communities, disability services and seniors.

Whilst an integrity and accountability crisis engulfed the Palaszczuk Labor government, the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee was primarily preoccupied with yet another crisis: Labor's failed administration of Queensland's health and hospital system. If nothing else, this budget and the subsequent estimates process laid bare the absolute failure of Labor's Minister for Health to properly manage Queensland Health and deliver the world-class health and hospital system that Queenslanders deserve.

Indeed, even leading into this year's state budget it was revealed that close to half a billion dollars had already been overspent by Labor thanks to its failed implementation of IT projects, including nearly \$300 million in cost blowouts under Queensland Health. Some 10 years after Labor's disastrous \$1.2 billion Health payroll debacle it is clear that those opposite have learned absolutely nothing. Through estimates this year it was also revealed that, whilst spending a record \$19.2 billion on Queensland Health, incredibly our public hospital system is more than \$30 million in the red largely thanks to the poor implementation and rollout of the \$1.5 billion integrated electronic Medical Record.

Whilst it has been a common feature of this Labor government time and again during the budgets and estimates process, this year it was particularly evident that, under Labor's failed Minister for Health, the Palaszczuk Labor government's priorities when it comes to Queensland Health are simply all wrong.

As the committee examined the portfolio responsibilities of community, disability services and seniors, serious concerns were raised as to the management of the Forensic Disability Service by the Minister for Disability Services. On more than one occasion when the minister was asked a question that pertained to her direct knowledge of matters involving and decisions taken by her the minister instead chose to obfuscate before deferring to her director-general. Critically, it was revealed that having

exercised her powers under section 87 of the Forensic Disability Act 2011 to request reports from the then director of forensic disability—a power that can only be exercised by the minister if it is in the public interest—the minister did not adequately disclose all of the circumstances surrounding these requests.

Whilst the minister did eventually disclose that a report was requested into the very serious incident of a client of the Forensic Disability Service absconding during a supervised outing—requiring the involvement of the Queensland Police Service, which was not communicated to the public—the minister's responses during estimates would suggest that there is a lot more that needs to be transparently disclosed on these issues. As I said, these reports can only be requested by the minister 'if the matter is in the public interest'; therefore, it is not unreasonable to ask the minister to further detail to the House just how many times she has exercised her power under section 87, the justification for each instance and the surrounding circumstances.

In my contribution today I would also like to note my great disappointment that the minister was prevented from explaining the Labor government's inadequate support of neighbourhood and community centres. Such centres are often at the very heart of a member's electorate. Indeed, I know just how important it is to the member for Lockyer following a recent visit to his electorate to see some of the amazing work being done by such centres, including the Laidley Community Centre. Understanding just how important these centres are I asked the reasonable question of the minister—

Given that car registration rose 2.25 per cent on 1 July 2019 based on an estimated CPI increase, why have neighbourhood and community centres not received a rise equal to this rego increase, based on the same CPI estimate?

Unfortunately, the chair of the committee chose to protect the minister and ceased questioning with more than eight minutes left for the committee's session. Both the member for Lockyer and I—and many others on this side of the House—would appreciate it if the minister could inform the parliament why she has chosen not to fund our Queensland neighbourhood centres at the rate of CPI indexation.

Before concluding I take this opportunity as the Liberal National Party shadow minister for seniors to acknowledge and congratulate all Queensland seniors during this week's Seniors Week celebrations. Our seniors make an invaluable contribution to our communities, and I look forward to once again hosting my Seniors Week morning tea in the next few weeks in the electorate of Moggill. I also thank all members of the committee and acknowledge the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors for her attendance on the day. I also acknowledge all of the hard work of the committee secretariat and all staff.