




Speech By  
**Jeff Seeney**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

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

 **Mr SEENEY** (Callide—LNP) (3.00 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the consideration of report No. 26 of the Finance and Administration Committee in regard to the budget estimates that were part of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2016. Each year this particular part of the budget estimates is something of a challenge for members of the parliament. It is something that my old mate—and I use the term loosely—Robbie Swarten and I discussed a week or so ago when we met up in Rockhampton and he was particularly vocal about in the consideration of this report every year, so I thought I would stand today and continue the tradition on his behalf if nothing else.

There has been a longstanding problem in this parliament of allocating money to maintain the parliament, and it is not the fault of either side of politics: it is the fault of the adversarial system here. Whoever is in government has to allocate money for the maintenance of the parliament, and whoever is in opposition fails to resist the temptation to criticise the allocation of that money. The people who lose are the people of Queensland, whose House this is. This precinct, as Robbie Swarten used to say, belongs to the people of Queensland and it should be the No. 1 public precinct in the state. It needs to be maintained in a condition that is fitting for that role, otherwise it reflects on all of us who are custodians of this place on behalf of the people of Queensland.

One of the things that we did to try and address this was to set up the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, the CLA, which was supposed to move beyond this partisan approach to allocate money each year in the budget for the parliament to make sure that these buildings and this precinct were maintained in a proper format and to ensure that the people who were elected to come and be part of this parliament were given resources and working conditions commensurate with their position in the community and commensurate with the role that they were expected to undertake so there was no longer any political pointscoring about the amount of money that was allocated each year in the budget for the maintenance of the parliament or for MPs to do their jobs. In listening to the estimates hearing this year I was somewhat gratified that there was none of that.

It was also gratifying to see bipartisan support for the renovation of level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe, because that was a disgrace to all of us who invited the people of Queensland into their own precinct. It was a good example of something that needed to be done and it was long overdue. I have no doubt that the current Treasurer was as reluctant to allocate money as treasurers that I was familiar with were reluctant to allocate money, but the point that Rob Swarten and I discussed a week or so ago was that it is one of the first responsibilities of us as a parliament to maintain the house that we occupy on behalf of the people who send us here.

There has similarly been bipartisan support for the increase in committee staff, and so there should be. There is a responsibility to ensure that the money that is allocated is spent properly, and that does not always happen. I am a bit concerned about the way that the level 7 project is blowing out, for example, but I am sure we will pursue that in the CLA. I am a bit concerned about the wi-fi system that was put into this place. I use 4G because the wi-fi is so darn slow. When we allocate money we have

to make sure that we get the result that is expected from the allocation of that public money, and we do not always get that in this sort of a situation. That is why I think we were moving towards independent maintenance of this precinct and an independent body to ensure that the precinct is maintained independent of the politics that are a natural part of this place.