



Speech by


**Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

Hansard Thursday, 4 August 2011

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (12.44 pm): As a member of the Industry, Education Training and Industrial Relations Committee, I make the following comments in relation to the tourism, manufacturing and small business section of the estimates report, and I acknowledge all of those involved. Tourism sits in DEEDI, which might explain its omission in this committee's title, but, then again, the Treasurer did go to some length to explain that the tourism portfolio was only one of several management units under his control—a comment that supports the growing perception that Labor at local, state and federal levels takes Queensland's \$9 billion tourism industry for granted, treating it as a limitless cash cow that they can abuse and milk at their whim.

Tourism, manufacturing and small business are responsible for employing hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders and generating billions of dollars for the state's economy, yet consideration of the portfolio was only given 60 minutes. Given the significant challenges these industries are facing, the brief period of time allocated in the 2011 estimates hearings could easily be viewed by many affected businesses as insulting and highly unsatisfactory. One hour shared between the opposition and the government was nowhere near enough time to examine all three components of this portfolio in the manner that they deserved.

Budgets and actual spends for supplies and services between 2008-09 and 2010-11 show a pattern of overspending that totals \$41 million over a three-year period. Budget allocations are rarely met and, from the minister's unconvincing and unsupported responses, it appears there is little or no attempt to maintain some form of doing so in the future. The accompanying footnotes did not identify in set terms or amounts the reasons for these overspends. This action in itself is misleading and reveals a tired, toxic Labor government trying to hide its sins.

Put simply, the budget papers surrounding spending details are inadequate. Budget items should be included in notes contained in budget papers. Unsatisfactory answers given with regard to funding deficits were neither helpful nor specific. The minister did not or could not give a straight answer, and the fact remains that her department overspent its budget. Of particular concern is the minister's belief that Queensland does not need a current aviation plan. The Queensland Commercial and Tourism Aviation Plan 2008-10 has well and truly expired and there is no sign of a replacement plan with an up-to-date policy. The minister brushed aside my question, revealing either arrogance or ignorance or both in regard to this subject. Meanwhile we have a struggling tourism industry reliant upon aviation to support it, saddled with a minister who supports a carbon tax which could cripple it.

On 11 March this year this minister told everyone to 'just wait and see' what Julia Gillard and Bob Brown had in store for them with the carbon tax. Well, they have waited and, now the carbon tax details have been released, it is clear that they will all suffer from higher domestic airfares, higher room rates, higher transport costs and higher power rates. Tourism in particular will be made less competitive and less

attractive at a time when this Labor government is urging us to holiday in Queensland, and this by a minister who was caught out spruiking super cheap deals that did not exist.

Labor is forcing a tax on us that will see more Aussies holiday overseas and bypass Queensland. But it appears that the honourable member for Whitsunday had planned for the carbon tax all along. During estimates she said—

Do you know, we did not wait for anything. We have been working with tourism businesses, with manufacturing businesses and with small businesses in many sectors for many years now on preparing them to succeed and be sustainable within a carbon constrained economy.

If the minister knew the carbon tax was coming, why did she tell businesses to just 'wait and see'? Last week on a visit to the Whitsundays residents labelled the member for Whitsunday the 'minister for hide and seek' because she had been mute on how the carbon tax will affect their ailing businesses. Why hasn't the member for Whitsunday fronted the already struggling businesses in her own electorate—some 40 of them forced to close their doors? What does she have to say to the business owners I have met who have not been able to pay themselves a wage for 12 months or the charter operator who had to lay off half their staff? Why didn't she demand answers from her Labor mate Mayor Brunner when he recently slashed \$100,000 from a \$250,000 local tourism budget?

I will tell you why: because she supports the carbon tax 100 per cent in any shape or form. She certainly does not support her constituents. She said as much at estimates. The minister tried to hide behind a distraction called the pledge which she stated was for the benefit of operators, but in truth any operators wanting to go on the Tourism Queensland sponsored roadshow in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria in May had to sign up. Instructions were given that signing up to the pledge was a prerequisite. Participants had to wear a branded shirt and be a member of an RTO. This was not about earning a certificate because you were an accredited provider; this was coercion to be selected to attend an interstate marketing campaign.

*(Time expired)*