



Speech by

Mr P. PURCELL

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard 21 October 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee B

Report

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.42 p.m.): I would like to give a few thank yous. I would like to thank my fellow committee members: the Deputy Chair, Mr Lawrence Springborg, the member for Warwick; Mr Jim Fouras, the member for Ashgrove; Mr Allan Grice, the member for Broadwater; Mr Ted Malone, the member for Mirani; and Mr Grant Musgrove, the member for Springwood. I thank also the staff: Mr Rob McBride, our research director; Miss Alison Wishart, our senior research officer; and Miss Sandy Musch, our executive assistant. The committee covered three portfolios: the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and the Minister for The Arts, Minister for Police and Corrective Services, and the Minister for Emergency Services.

As to the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts—I point out that that portfolio had a \$42.5m increase on last year's expenditure, which is not quite a 10% increase. As I think most people would realise, that increase is absolutely needed in the justice section. Funding for legal aid has been increased by \$5m. \$15.8m has been made available for legal aid this year. The appointment of another judge has been badly needed for some time to catch up on appeal matters. Funding has been allocated for a review of the impact of the Criminal Code on women and a review of freedom of information legislation.

Funding has been provided for the extension of the Brisbane Biennial Festival of Music into regional Queensland, which is not before time. The Minister should be congratulated for that. That festival will become the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music. We will bring that to our country cousins as well as people in the city. Funding for the Regional Arts Development Fund has been increased.

As to capital works—cultural infrastructure has been provided in regional Queensland: \$16m in Townsville, \$2.2m in Maryborough, \$0.5m in Ipswich to do up the old town hall, \$0.1m for the development of the Caloundra Regional Art Gallery, and \$50,000 for the Redcliffe Cultural Centre. If we do not continue to spend money in those regional centres, our arts infrastructure will die on the vine.

Turning to the Police portfolio, it is pleasing to see that its budget increased by 10.6%. I congratulate the Minister on making funds available in this year's budget for the Morningside Police Station. That will probably be finished in next year's budget. I thank him very much for that. Funding has been provided for the completion of the Palm Beach Police Station, Centenary Police Station and the Gladstone district headquarters and watch-house. The Brisbane City Watch-house will receive a good boost of almost \$11.4m, which is overdue. The Public Works Committee considered that project and found that it qualified for that funding.

Turning to the Department of Emergency Services, the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority—that budget for the Department of Emergency Services has increased by 22.9%. That is not before time. Those people are very important to our communities.

I will comment on the dissenting report. I thought that the Minister handled well the matter in regards to funds that were there and those that were not there in relation to the figure of \$118m. I can very well remember a Minister in the previous Government who, when there was \$1.2 billion in the

WorkCover fund, destroyed the WorkCover scheme in this State—which was the best WorkCover scheme in Australia—on the basis of an auditor's report that was a guesstimate. I believe that the raising of that issue was not the doing of the Opposition committee members. I believe it was the doing of someone else, because nothing was mentioned at the committee meeting.

Time expired.
