



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES B

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydoore—NPA) (3.46 p.m.): I rise to speak to the budget estimates process and particularly to make some comments with regard to the Police Service budget and also Corrective Services as it applies to drug courts. The Sunshine Coast is a fast-growing region and, like other parts of Queensland, it has a need for more resources. I find it incredible that in this budget no allocation was made to set aside land for a new police station in the greater Coolum area. Currently, there is an old house—I think it used to belong to the Department of Primary Industries or maybe Forestry—that many years ago was converted to use as a police office in the backblocks of Coolum, well off the main drag through town. It is inadequate, it is not well placed, and it does not have the advantage of having a deterrence value for those who may be setting out to do the wrong thing by the community by robbing or taking dangerous actions on the road. It is time that a new police station was built near the main roads, with high visibility and access for the police and certainly access for the public.

The greater Coolum area is a fast-growing area. My electorate takes in Mount Coolum, Point Arkwright, Yaroomba, the northern part of the Maroochy north shore, and also the Coolum area proper and to the north. I call on this government to reconsider this issue, to set land aside, to establish a building program and to take the opportunity to give this area a proper police station to replace the antiquated building that they have at the moment. I think what we all fear is that, because of the high rate of growth in the area, the opportunity to get some land that is near a main road will be lost. I know there are some possible sites around the Mount Coolum area, but that process needs to be entered into now.

One would think that there would also be some planning to build a proper water police station for the Sunshine Coast. Currently, the water police are based at the Kawana Police Station, which is not on the water. That necessitates the police travelling by car to where the boats are located at Mooloolaba. During peak traffic times, that can be a 20-minute journey. I think that is a joke. We appreciate the work that the water police do. It would certainly be of great benefit if they had a police station that was actually near the water. I raise that issue because it has not been addressed and there is still a reluctance on the part of the government to even flag it as an issue for consideration. Because of the increase in the number of people using our waterways, the policing of those waterways is an important issue. I understand that something like double the number of registered boats will be on the water by the year 2015. That is a huge reason—in addition to the need in other portfolio areas such as boating and fisheries—for providing an adequate number of officers to actually enforce regulations under the Queensland Transport department acts. Car noise—sometimes called hooning—is also an issue and there is currently legislation before the parliament in that regard.

We need to know that there will in fact be the officers to enforce the laws. This is an issue not only on the Sunshine Coast but throughout a lot of other regions in Queensland, particularly the Gold Coast, parts of Ipswich and the northern parts of Brisbane. It is all very well to have laws, but we need enough officers to enforce them. I am calling on the government to ensure that we do. Drug courts have bypassed the Sunshine Coast, despite the very high rate of drug related crimes and problems. It is a beautiful place to live but, once again, it is touched with that scourge experienced in other parts of Queensland. There are virtually no residential based rehabilitation beds and we need those facilities to

operate a drug court, and other support services. The state government needs to get behind this and commit to providing those services on the Sunshine Coast so that some of those potential service providers can get up and running. Why should there be black holes that get passed over in regard to these services? We must see some proper drug rehabilitation and preventative programs implemented on the Sunshine Coast, which has a desperate need for them.

Time expired.