




Speech by
Sean Choat

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2012

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL:
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

 **Mr CHOAT** (Ipswich West—LNP) (6.01 pm): I rise to make a serious contribution in reflection of the estimates hearings. Firstly, I would like to state that it has been an honour to serve on the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee as the portfolio areas in its focus are extremely important to me and to the people of Ipswich West.

In my maiden speech to this parliament I reflected on the feelings of my people with regard to law and order and their sense of disappointment about the past inadequacies of Labor strategies for addressing such matters. Sadly, many people across Queensland feel intimidated and even harassed whilst out in the general community and even in their own homes as a result of years of Labor's 'go soft on crime' ideologies. I am so pleased to see that, after only seven months of this very determined and responsible LNP government, legislation has been passed which makes a huge difference in dealing with criminals and their activities. My role on the committee has enabled me to see firsthand the overwhelming public support for the bills which have come before it and to gain a good understanding of the positive impacts that such legislation will have.

I must say that I was thoroughly impressed by the attentive and obviously serious consideration that the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police and Community Safety displayed throughout the hearings. Both ministers have a very obvious and comprehensive understanding of their respective portfolios and are both very well advised by their staff. The Attorney-General demonstrated just how much he values the work of the Crime and Misconduct Commission when he was able to speak confidently about the funding of approximately \$50 million a year for this important commission and its activities in relation to law and order.

It was also very pleasing to hear the Attorney-General speak just as confidently about the budget allocations to various parts of his department and the numerous activities undertaken that support grassroots community initiatives. The Attorney-General was very clear about his determination to ensure that the Crime and Misconduct Commission is fair and thorough in all of its endeavours and that it applies natural justice to all people. The review which was also announced by the Attorney-General will ensure that it is a completely independent body and that it is appropriately resourced now and into the future.

The Attorney-General impressed me with his response to my questioning about the new boot camp pilots, which will form an innovative strategy to get young people out of detention centres and back to contributing positively to our community. For too long Queensland youth justice was not a priority of past Labor governments. The new government immediately moved youth justice from the department of communities to the Attorney-General's department. There is an exciting opportunity here. Boot camps will be trialled in Cairns and at the Gold Coast. The Attorney-General revealed to the hearing that about 32 per cent of young people in our detention centres have been there up to five times before. I look forward to

seeing the success of the trials, which I am confident will bring about the intervention and deterrence we have longed for in this most serious area of law and order.

I have to say that I could not have been more impressed by the Minister for Police and Community Safety and his superior knowledge of the workings of his department and its various divisions. As he was a serving police officer himself for some 20 years, it was no surprise to witness the minister's confidence in speaking about aspects of the Queensland police force. Even more impressive was the ease with which the minister was able to go into great detail about other areas of his department. Whether it was the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Ambulance Service, Emergency Services or Corrective Services, the minister displayed to the hearing great insight and there was little his able commissioners and heads of department could add.

I was, of course, stoked about the allocations to my electorate, including the great new fire and rescue station at Brassall, the new mini police station being constructed at Riverlink Shopping Centre, the new ambulance delivered to Lowood Ambulance Station and the additional police officers we will have on the ground across Ipswich West. I very much enjoyed my participation in the estimates process and would like to take this opportunity to thank our chairman, Mr Ray Hopper—great job, Ray—and my fellow committee members who are here, Bill Byrne, Jason Woodforth, Madam Deputy Speaker, yourself—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! When referring to members please use their correct title.

Mr CHOAT: Okay, Verity Barton, I do apologise—Madam Deputy Speaker, I apologise. I would also like to take an opportunity to thank the fantastic and competent staff who work with the committee led by Brook Hastie, Sharon Hunter, Ali Jarro, Kelli Longworth and, of course, the hardworking Gail Easton. They make the work so much easier. They are a delight and a credit to this parliament. I commend the report to the House.