




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Record of Proceedings, 7 August 2014

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Health and Community Services Committee, Report

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (12.05 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Community Services Committee's report on the budget estimates processes for 2014-15, which took place on 15 and 17 July this year. The estimates process for the Health and Community Services Committee was a shining example of the hard work of four ministers responsible for very challenging portfolios who have made huge strides in delivering for Queenslanders and residents of my electorate in Mudgeeraba.

First and foremost, the Health and Community Services Committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2014 for the committee's area of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. This is because in our four portfolio areas the ministers have delivered a responsible budget that sees better service delivery and sound financial management.

I thank the Minister for Health for his cooperation with the committee and for his updates on what he is doing to ensure that Queensland's health system is performing better than ever. As a registered nurse of over 30 years and as a member of this place representing the electorate that includes Robina Hospital, health is one of my passions, and it is fantastic that we have a hardworking Minister for Health who shares that passion.

Health in this state is now a \$13.622 billion portfolio, which has increased by almost \$1 billion on its 2013-14 adjusted operating budget, meaning better services and a huge investment for health services in electorates such as mine. Under this minister's leadership, we have seen waste stopped, services restored, great initiatives funded and, unlike under those opposite, our nurses actually paid. In Mudgeeraba, we have seen the benefits since 2012 of having a minister with vision and who can manage his department responsibly. We have seen at Robina Hospital huge increases in funding, while there have been tremendous decreases simultaneously in ambulance ramping and waiting times at the emergency department.

We are also very lucky in my electorate to have the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing at the helm of this important portfolio and managing it with absolute competence. I thank the minister for answering our questions during estimates, and it was great to hear him reaffirm his commitment to electorates such as mine.

As members are aware after my countless speeches in this place, my electorate is home to amazing World Heritage listed national parks such as Springbrook National Park, which, as I always say, is the green behind the gold. We have seen some fantastic announcements in recent weeks that highlight our commitment to this important area in my electorate and which underscore not only my commitment to unlocking Springbrook but also the minister's commitment to responsible ecotourism throughout our state. I thank the minister for being so open and frank about his commitment to

Springbrook locals during estimates and the importance of ensuring that Springbrook Mountain is no longer ignored, as it was by the Labor Party, who for selfish political reasons made a deal with the Greens to buy up properties and lock away all that Springbrook had to offer.

Demonstrating a similar commitment to my electorate, and its community groups in particular, is the Minister for Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services, who is leading a very important portfolio. It is great to see our local community grants programs such as Caring for our Community being launched by the minister to ensure that funding is given to those organisations that need it most. In my electorate of Mudgeeraba, this means that some fantastic local groups are receiving the funding they need to continue to make an important difference in our local community.

Another important policy area that our committee had a chance to explore during this year's estimates is that of the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, who is making great strides in his work, with a focus on economic participation and improving the community participation of diverse groups throughout Queensland. In this portfolio, we see the government assisting aspiring homeowners in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to move towards homeownership, creating greater wealth and economic opportunity by facilitating expressions of interest with communities, conducting analysis of applications and working with Indigenous Business Australia and the Department of Housing and Public Works to progress loan applications.

These are important initiatives, and it is obvious that this minister is dedicated to improving economic and community participation within a diverse array of Queensland communities. I again thank all the ministers for their willingness to engage so openly and frankly with our committee during estimates this year and for their continued leadership of important departments which will no doubt continue to play an important role in the lives of millions of Queenslanders into the foreseeable future. This is a great state with great opportunities, and we are seeing the tangible evidence of all that we have been able to achieve, particularly in these four portfolio areas. I look forward to continuing to work with these ministers to achieve great results for the Mudgeeraba electorate.