




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (7.50 pm): I start by thanking my staff, departmental officers and the committee staff who, frankly, made the estimates a very enjoyable event for me. We did a number of rehearsals leading into estimates which were far more searing and ruthless than anything the opposition put on in the committee. In fact, I was well prepared for a thorough interrogation of the budget papers. We were not prepared to go into a committee where there was virtually no reference to the budget papers, budget allocations or issues or priorities that came out of the budget papers. In fact, in the last committee process that we went through the opposition revealed that it could not read an SDS or any of the budget papers. A comment that I made in this debate last time was that my shadow at the time had not read the SDS.

Clearly they made a very positive decision not to bother with the budget papers at all in the interrogation of the budget. All we saw from the member for Everton, coming in to play his role as a shadow, was the rolling out of a series of newspapers or ideas or things that he had heard, but there was very little reference back to the budget papers, there was very little reference back to the substance of what that committee was entitled and expected to do which was to look at the appropriations of this government, hold the government to account and ask the government to explain those allocations. There was virtually none of that and there was all this other puffery that came from the opposition madly trying to find a six o'clock sound bite.

There are two lessons one has to learn in politics, especially if one is the shadow police minister: the first is do not criticise the Queensland Police Service. Those opposite can belt me as much as they like. The commissioner says there is an adequate supply of vehicles in the Queensland Police Service. That is the advice given to me from senior police. Those opposite do not believe it. They stand up in this House and belittle the reputation of the Queensland Police Service and the commissioner. They have not learned their lesson. There was no focused interrogation of the budget papers whatsoever.

Mr KRAUSE: I rise to a point of order. I ask that the member withdraw his comments about impugning the reputation of the Police Commissioner because I did not mention the Police Commissioner at all.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): There is no point of order. Minister, continue.

Mr BYRNE: Thank you. I will try, for the rest of my speech, to address matters that came out of the budget. What do we see in the budget papers? We saw 266 new police officers delivered in the 2016-17 period. We saw 2,200 body worn video cameras for front-line police—we did not hear anything about that from the opposition in the committee process. It builds on an additional \$6 million that we allocated to that initiative in the previous budget. Under the Liberal National Party the hardworking police service that they espouse to have an empathy with had to use their own money and purchase their own cameras. Now they have 2,200 body worn cameras thanks to the Palaszczuk government.

The Palaszczuk government has also moved quickly to ensure Queensland is safe with more than \$16 million set aside for police to improve counterterrorism capability and capacity in response to the sustained national threat level—there was no comment from the opposition about any of that—including \$788,000 for operational equipment and vehicles. There was no comment from the opposition about that. An amount of \$5 million has been allocated to develop a business case for a contemporary counterterrorism and community safety centre at Westgate Police Academy—no acknowledgement from the opposition.

The Palaszczuk government has also provided the Queensland Police Service and other agencies with increased funding of \$39.1 million over four years to target serious and organised crime and to implement the government's response to the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report—no acknowledgement from the opposition again; nothing about any of that. The amount of \$3.2 million has already been put in for two years to tackle child exploitation and implement the interim response to the report. Importantly, that funding will enable a statewide blitz on child exploitation material by building the capacity of specialist officers, providing additional civilian staff and regional travel and training costs—a very important component. This is just one small part of the police budget allocation. There was absolutely no interrogation from those opposite, an appalling exhibition of laziness and a lack of understanding of what their role in this parliament is.