



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

### **Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee, Report**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.57 pm): I rise to speak in support of the budget estimates report, which presents a summary of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2018-19 financial year. As we know, the consideration of the budget estimates allows for the public examination of the responsible ministers and the chief executive officers of agencies within the committee's portfolio areas. As chair, I am proud to announce that the committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2018 for the committee's areas of responsibility, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Minister for Health and Minister for Ambulance Services; the Minister for Communities and Minister for Disability Services and Seniors; and the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. I would also like to thank my fellow members of the committee, particularly the government members, for their hard work and valuable contribution. I will touch on the contributions of the non-government members shortly. The participation of the government members in the estimates committee hearing provided additional scrutiny of the estimates.

Finally, I thank the committee secretariat, our other Parliamentary Service staff and Auslan Connections for their assistance throughout the estimates process. In particular, I would like to thank Ms Leanne Linard, the member for Nudgee, who was a substitute member of the committee at the public hearing for Ms Joan Pease, who was recovering from a health related issue. I know she was watching us. A number of opposition members attended the estimates committee hearing, including the Independent member for Noosa, Sandy Bolton.

It is pleasing to hear that in health related areas \$53.3 million was given to deliver projects as part of the Rural and Regional Infrastructure Package, including redevelopment of Townsville Hospital clinical services, the construction of a new Cairns mental health facility and, of course, the member for Maryborough would be happy with the new emergency department and specialist outpatient department under the Queensland Health Infrastructure Program.

Something near and dear to my heart, of course, is the Queensland Ambulance Service, which had a record budget of \$800 million this year, which is an increase of 11.2 per cent, to recruit 100 additional ambulance operatives to provide enhanced roster coverage, \$15.1 million for vehicles and stretchers and \$2.5 million for ambulance facilities, including a plan to progress new stations and replace stations in my electorate at Kirwan and Mareeba. That is fantastic to hear from the Minister for Health. A number of issues were raised at the public hearing around enhanced renal services in North Queensland and patients receiving treatment within clinically recommended time frames.

With regard to the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women I want to touch on the capital works program for the department of child safety which is \$49 million for 2018-19. These funds provide the infrastructure and assistance to support children, young people and families to be safe and help prevent and respond to crime, violence, abuse and neglect. I will give a shout-out to Ms Holly Crockford, parliamentary intern, who is in the public gallery today. She is assisting me with examining the efficacy of our youth justice initiatives in Queensland.

With regard to the statement of reservations, it was disturbing that the member for Caloundra, a well-respected member who has been here a long time, did not get to ask a question during the estimates hearing. The member for Nicklin, a standing member of this committee, got to ask one question late in the day.

**An honourable member:** It was a good question, though.

**Mr HARPER:** It was a good question. Those opposite did touch on the unfairness of time. The total hearing time allocated to government was 188 minutes and 242 minutes to non-government. To put that in perspective, the member for Maiwar, who is a standing member of that committee, had every right, as did the member for Noosa, to ask questions in the non-government block of questions. On balance non-government questions exceeded government questions significantly. I commend the report to the House.