




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

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

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.42 pm): I rise today to speak to the estimates report tabled by the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee on the Appropriation Bill 2018. This year our committee agreed on a process for the overall conditions for the examination of each portfolio area. We started the day with Health and Ambulance Services, then Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, and finished with Child Safety, Youth and Women and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence.

I would like to thank our committee chair, the member for Thuringowa; the deputy chair, the member for Caloundra; and other committee members including the member for Nicklin, the member for Lytton and the member for Maiwar. I would also like to thank the ministers, their staff, the directors-general, the departmental staff and all the parliamentary committee staff involved in preparing for the day.

As the member for Rockhampton, it was a great opportunity to ask ministers questions about issues that impact on the residents of the Rockhampton electorate. I was particularly pleased with the response when I asked the health minister what programs had been funded to help patients in Central Queensland to be treated closer to home.

The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service has a service footprint that is almost twice the size of Tasmania. This makes reducing patient travel a key focus for this government. Given the impact that travel has on the patient, their family and their overall healthcare experience, we are working hard to ensure that patients can access health care as close to their homes as possible because we know this is important to regional and rural Queenslanders.

We have seen a record investment of \$610 million this financial year for the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service. The Central Queensland HHS is aiming to reduce the incidence of patient travel by 10,000 trips. To do this, the HHS has introduced a range of new services and innovative delivery models and expanded its very successful telehealth program. These initiatives are delivering outstanding results. Central Queensland HHS is one of the biggest users of telehealth in Queensland. Telehealth has saved the people of Central Queensland an estimated 2.4 million kilometres of travel through over 11,000 telehealth sessions. I congratulate the hardworking and innovative healthcare staff.

I asked the Minister for Communities about the role of public servants in community recovery after a natural disaster. She advised that to deliver this service the department of communities manages the community recovery ready reserve, a pool of Queensland public servants who come from all Queensland government departments to help their fellow Queenslanders get back on their feet after a disaster. Following a disaster, ready reservists are deployed into the seriously impacted areas when it

is safe to do so, providing affected residents with information, connecting them with support services, assisting people to apply for financial assistance and generally being a support and a listening ear. I acknowledge all those ready reservists for the amazing work that they do each and every time they are called upon.

I must also acknowledge the Minister for Child Safety, Youth and Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence for the very thorough and detailed responses that she provided.

I would also like to put on the record my disappointment at the questions asked by the opposition during my first estimates hearings. The questions were about scaremongering and pointscoreing and were not in the interests of the residents of Queensland. The very first question asked by the member for Mudgeeraba was lengthy, had multiple questions contained in the question and did not comply with the standing orders, but in good faith the Minister for Health answered her question. I thought some of the questions were of such a very low level that the opposition really needs to do some homework before the next estimates.