



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

##### **Appropriation Bill**

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

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.37 pm): Thank you, Deputy Speaker. As the deputy chair of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee you know the extensive work that went into the estimates process. I rise to speak in support of and commend the report of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's examination of the budget estimates for the 2019-20 financial year.

I start by thanking 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. Each of the ministers and their departmental staff gave significant information to the committee process. I also thank the committee members for their hard work and valuable contribution to the estimates process.

There was a significant increase of 6.6 per cent on last year's health budget, going from \$17.3 billion to \$18.4 billion. In Townsville there was a significant increase of 5.5 per cent in the operating budget of the Townsville Hospital and Health Service, going from \$938 million to just over \$1 billion. Recently the member for Townsville and I joined the health minister to see a linear accelerator being placed into the hospital. We have also seen completion of the paediatric ward. There is more to be done. The Palaszczuk Labor government cares about the health of Queenslanders and is clearly investing in HHSs right across the state.

I was particularly happy to see \$132 million over four years to be distributed across the HHSs for renal care, frail and older persons care, and cardiac care initiatives. Our committee is currently working through the aged care, palliative care and end-of-life care inquiry and I welcome the \$17 million for community based palliative care services. We have been told that in the Bundaberg area there is a \$7 million investment in the service provision for palliative care. There is \$37 million for the Health Promotion Agency and, importantly, \$61 million in new funding over four years to address gaps in Queensland's approach to suicide prevention. I am very happy to see the Enhancing Regional Hospitals program receive funding of \$78 million.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has received a record budget of \$885 million. Funding for an additional 200 ambulance operatives will meet the growth in demand for ambulance services throughout the state. That is something that I am very proud to have been involved in and seen

delivered. It includes nine positions into the Townsville Local Ambulance Service Network, as well as some for the Kirwan station. The service will also receive significant funding for the third year of the Queensland Ambulance Service Certified Agreement.

In my time remaining, I turn to the portfolio of disability services and seniors. I congratulate the minister on the announcement of \$2.9 million for the Townsville Women's Centre, which was discussed through the capital program at the estimates hearing and, importantly, the \$4.1 million to construct the Oasis Townsville to provide a one-stop shop for support services for our veterans and ex-Australian Defence Force personnel and families.

I touch on that point because recent media reports quoted the Australian Minister for Defence giving a \$5 million commitment to that project. That was a federal election commitment. We get to actually see that. I think the words they used in the media were something like, 'Look, it's dependent now on relevant legislative and budget processes.' What a load of rubbish. We are the ones who got it going through the good work of the member for Mundingburra and we can deliver it. We can talk about real funding for the Oasis, because we know how important veteran support is in our garrison city of Townsville. The federal government has let us down with a wishy-washy approach to a \$5 million promise to finish the complex. We care about it and we are getting on with the job. I make special mention of that project because we know how important it is to the veterans in Townsville.

There is a whole heap of the usual whining and moaning in the statement of reservation. I point out that 245 minutes was allocated to non-government members versus 185 minutes for government members. They wasted their time and did not contribute anything.