



Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise as the chair of the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee to speak to the 2019-20 Appropriation Bill for the portfolio areas of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice; the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services; and the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. I present report No. 44, which is on the Appropriation Bill 2019. The committee's recommendation is that the proposed expenditure for the committee's areas of responsibility as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2019 be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

On behalf of the committee I thank the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice; the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services; and the Minister for Fire and Emergency Services as well as their staff for their attendance and providing details in answering questions of the committee during the estimates hearing. In my contribution today I intend to highlight some of the important aspects of the estimates hearing as highlighted by the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. As highlighted in the Attorney-General's opening remarks to the committee on Friday, 26 July, the Attorney advised the estimates hearing that this was her fifth year of reporting on the government's progress on its justice initiatives which, as the Attorney alluded to in her opening comments, continue to foster safer communities for our state.

The Attorney advised estimates that as the state's population increases there are many increasing demands on the justice and court system. The budget for 2019-20 will provide more resources to meet these demands. Some \$57.7 million is allocated over the next four years for the operation of the Queensland courts. Work has commenced on the refurbishment of Bundaberg courthouse, and by the end of the year major capital works will be completed on Rockhampton, Townsville and Beenleigh courthouses. The total budget for these major capital works is \$32 million, and the capital works are progressing on schedule. The capital works are a further commitment by the Palaszczuk government to the expansion of the government's policy—a key plank in addressing domestic and family violence issues and in assisting victims with the best possible support.

The 2019-20 budget also significantly increases funding for child protection and support initiatives by providing increased funding of \$13.5 million for Child Protection Litigation services and increasing funding over three years for the Queensland Family and Child Commission to continue research, evaluation and awareness initiatives. The 2019-20 budget is also investing in additional specialist court

magistrates, staff, security and legal advocates to increase the number of cases able to be heard in the Childrens Court. The program is directly designed to reduce the number of children on remand or having their matters finalised by a court.

The examples I have referred to in my contribution are only some of the budget items that show the Palaszczuk government's commitment to the people of Queensland. The 2019-20 budget continues the Palaszczuk government's responsibility of keeping communities safe by the injection of funds into vital services under the guidance of the Attorney-General.

I now move to the estimates hearing of the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. As the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services advised, Queensland has in excess of 11,000 sworn police officers working hard to keep Queenslanders safe. As the minister alluded to, the Queensland Police Service is a modern policing service—a service characterised by transparency and accountability, a service that is always looking to the future and embracing cutting-edge technology, a service that always responds quickly to community needs and a service that is unafraid to adopt the latest strategies and philosophies of policing to deliver a world-class level of service to the Queensland community.

The estimates hearing also heard from the minister that the Queensland Police Service has adopted a borderless policing model. The police now are able to flow in numbers to where they are needed. The model governs the way that the police operate on a daily basis across Queensland. I commend the Palaszczuk government, the government's budget and the report to the House.