



Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 24 February 2021


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL**

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

#### **Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill**

#### **Community Support and Services Committee, Report**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.32 pm): I rise to speak about the estimates process and, in particular, the work of the Community Support and Services Committee in that process. I acknowledge the hard work of the committee and recognise the chair, the deputy chair and all of the committee members, as well as all of those who contributed to the estimates process last year. It was pleasing to see that we actually got it done. I know that many, including our parliamentary staff and secretariat, undertake an enormous amount of work. In particular, I acknowledge the departmental staff who were there. I also acknowledge the minister's statements around meaningful accountability. It is critical that we use our opportunity and our positions when it comes to the estimates process, as well as each and every day in this House, to uphold what the taxpayers of this great state expect, which is meaningful accountability.

I draw the attention of the House to the discussion that was had and the questioning around supervised community accommodation, more commonly known as bail houses, and the \$30.8 million that was spent on that failed policy. The minister and I probably do not see to eye on whether or not it was a successful program. A media release that was distributed at the time that the session commenced announced the closure of bail houses because they worked. I would question that. The failed youth justice department was dismantled as it is now a good match with the integration of youth justice and child protection. I would question that that is the reform agenda that advocates are asking for. It could be suggested that putting together two broken systems without a cohesive and social policy platform is fraught with danger and will continue to fail our most vulnerable children and young people unless the cohesive and social policy platform is clearly articulated and executed. Part of my role is to ensure that that is upheld and I look forward to working in a bipartisan way with the minister to achieve that.

Information sharing between Child Safety and the police continues to be an issue. The police are spending countless hours and time after hours performing the roles of CSOs. We recognise that there is more to do in that space. The coroner made it clear that timely and transparent information sharing was key to ensuring the safety of children. During estimates when we asked about how much redacted information was being sent to police the response was quickly shut down, which was disappointing. That is on the back of the coronial inquiry and key recommendations made after the Mason Jett Lee case. Since that time we have seen many more children failed by the system. In fact, 14 children have lost their lives since the death of Mason Jett Lee and 18 children's lives have been lost under this government, which is an exceptionally sad figure.

Failing policy has delivered failing departments. When I speak about departments I am not referring to the workforce of that department. In fact, they are the ones who are failed. Sadly, the frontline workers and those they seek to support have been failed. I point to the Moreton Bay region where staff on the front line are so desperate to have anyone in government take action on case loads, culture and management practice that they have written to the Premier, our then opposition leader Deb Frecklington MP and the former minister. When I raised that letter with the director-general, I was told that the minister had not been briefed. Sadly, I hope that has been now addressed. I will table the letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, to various recipients, regarding workplace culture within Child Safety Services in the Moreton Bay region [185](#).

That broken system has been passed from one minister to another and there is more work to be done. Staff are crying out for more work to be done. The community that is impacted by the challenges that the staff themselves see every day are asking for more to be done to ensure that children are protected. I draw the attention of the House to the comments contained in that letter. In part it states—

It is time to listen to the people who are actually aware of what is going wrong on the ground. We are trying to tell you why kids are being harmed without appropriate risk assessments and effective safety planning! If you ask us, we will tell you.

The letter further states—

This letter is about seeking for change and supporting us to be able to do the work we are all so passionate about.

It also refers to ‘secrecy, culture of management and leadership protecting each other at the expense of workers wellbeing and safety and the wellbeing and safety of vulnerable children in our community’. It is not acceptable and I certainly encourage the minister to delve deeper into the claims made in that letter. I commend my comments to the House.