




Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.18 pm): I rise to contribute to the Appropriations Bill and in particular outline my concerns, which have been shared by my colleagues, around budget cuts to infrastructure spending of \$4 billion, the need for this government to borrow to pay wages just to keep the lights on and a government that sells an asset to itself. After the handing down of the budget, many across our state would be thinking that is nothing more than creative accounting. I would like to touch first on the portfolios that I am responsible for, including child safety and child protection.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. The Minister for Education and the member for Nanango will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

Ms CAMM: First I would like to address the budget for child safety. I share the views of the Leader of the Opposition, who today expressed our support for the increase in the frontline workforce of child safety through the provision of an additional 154 frontline workers over the next two years. I encourage the minister to engage significantly across the child safety sector to ensure the culture and policy position are such that funding is utilised in a way that will protect children.

I also encourage the minister to consider greater additional funding to create frameworks and structures to help support those in our communities who want to engage in foster care. I know from speaking to foster-carers and those applying to become foster-carers that it can take over a year and a half to process applications. When it takes longer to fall pregnant and deliver a child than to become a foster-carer in this state there is room for improvement. We have willing and able community members who have much to give and we need to do a lot better in that space.

I will touch on the domestic violence portfolio. It is very pleasing to see that the government has released a statement for women. It is also pleasing to see that they have adopted the Morrison approach to economic security and safety for women. Earlier this year, the federal government delivered the most significant budget allocation for women. It is very pleasing to see the alignment of the Labor state government with the federal Liberal National Party, which is investing in women's security and safety. In the area of protection for women, in this state Labor budget it is disappointing to see a commitment of only \$7.5 million per year over the next four years. A commitment of \$30 million could bolster desperately needed and underfunded domestic violence services.

It is also disappointing to compare this state's contribution to that of Victoria, which has contributed significantly to domestic and family violence services. This government leaves the sector wanting. On the back of the \$25 million that was allocated by the Scott Morrison coalition government in response to COVID-19 and domestic and family violence, this state government has contributed only

\$7.5 million, which is only 29 per cent of the federal government's contribution. In comparison, their Victorian counterparts committed \$20 million, which is 65 per cent. Those working across the sector would have been pleased if we had seen a similar percentage contribution from this state government.

I take this opportunity to advocate on behalf of the sector. Last month in Mount Isa I had the great privilege of attending a meeting of the Queensland Domestic Violence Services Network. It was disappointing that the minister was unable to attend a meeting with those stakeholders, but I certainly valued their time and the opportunity to speak with them about what they think is needed to ensure that their funding is sustainable into the long term.

COVID has had a number of impacts. In fact, we hear that from this government every single day in the House. However, there is no recognition that the funding allocated to domestic violence services only touches the surface. It really only makes up for the lack of funding that we already had. COVID has made that worse. We need an increase in core funding to support domestic violence services each and every year over four years so that those services can have certainty about retention, strategies for their staff, workforce development, upskilling and the ability to deal with the complex issues that they see day in, day out. I recognise the high-risk teams that take a coordinated approach and are working well across the state. However, with an increase in funding we would be able to help more women, children and others who come forward after experiencing trauma or domestic and family violence.

My electorate of Whitsunday starts in the Northern Beaches of Mackay, which is the fastest growing part of the Mackay local government area, and extends to north of Airlie Beach. We contribute significantly to this state's economy. Therefore, it is disappointing to see the lack of investment in infrastructure projects across regional Queensland and across the Whitsundays and Mackay in particular. The lack of economic infrastructure leaves regional Queensland wanting. I have heard many ministers in this House talk about the Bruce Highway. However, we see a \$4 billion cut to infrastructure funding at a time when the state government is already \$6 billion behind in maintenance funding for the Bruce Highway. I invite the ministers to drive my part of the Bruce Highway, as has our shadow minister, the member for Chatsworth.

Mr O'Connor: He might cycle it. Can he bring the lycra?

Ms CAMM: If the minister would like to cycle the Bruce Highway I would happily host him in my region. He would be risking his life but I encourage him to come along.

In my community we do not have a shortage of projects. We have a long list of projects that the government could have chosen to fund, but instead they have fallen short of the mark. We have a skills shortage across the Whitsundays community. We have a housing shortage. We have a health services shortage. It is disappointing that the Labor government chose to reannounce projects that have been under construction since Cyclone Debbie. No new projects have been announced for the Whitsunday electorate. In fact, most of our projects will be almost finished by the last quarter of this year. The budget contains reannouncements of the Mackay Ring Road and upgrades to the Bruce Highway that I can drive on. We can proudly announce that the ring-road is finished and has actually been opened, yet it is in the budget.

The feasibility studies for the Mackay Bucasia Road upgrades have been pushed out in the forward estimates to 2023-34. That is a critical road in and out of the Northern Beaches of Mackay. It is a critical road to transport children to and from school. It is a critical road for emergency services. It is a critical road for commuters. However, this state Labor government has no plan for that road. It has not allocated funding to build the duplication of that road.

There has not been an exclusive investment in social or community housing for the region. Recently the shadow minister for housing visited the region and the response that we received, through the media, from the member for Mackay was that there are 10 new social houses being built in Mackay. Isn't that fantastic for the 800 applicants awaiting social housing across Mackay and the Whitsundays!

I had the privilege of speaking to both local mayors in the past 24 hours. The Whitsunday and Mackay regional councils welcome the Works for Queensland program and as a former deputy mayor I see the value in that program.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms CAMM: I take that interjection. I will speak about George Christensen because he has delivered more in infrastructure funding for the seat of Mackay and the seat of Whitsunday than this state Labor government has in its entire term.

Mr O'Connor: What is his margin?

Ms CAMM: I take that interjection from the member for Bonney. I think his margin is sitting at about 13½ per cent across the safe Labor seat of Mackay.

The Labor government continue to ignore the Whitsunday region. They continue to ignore the health demands in a regional community. Recently I visited the Proserpine Hospital with the newly appointed chair and CEO. I was very pleased to engage with the local health service and I acknowledge the amazing work that they do. However, it is not pleasing that there is no funding for the renal dialysis unit, which the Labor government committed to during the election. A local resident in my community, Navio, has been fighting for a renal dialysis unit for a long time. He says—

We need facilities closer to the people who require this service. I can't see why the Queensland Government keeps talking about how good their health system is, but a centre like Proserpine doesn't have this service.

While I am all for an increase in services for people all across Queensland, nothing infuriates me more than seeing announcements for new satellite hospitals in South-East Queensland so that people can be closer to services when people in my community have to risk their lives driving on the goat track that is the Bruce Highway to access renal dialysis. People who are elderly have to make that trip twice a week. It is appalling.

I would also like to touch on the announcement that was made for the Resources Centre of Excellence that is outlined in the budget. It is a fantastic facility. It, too, is open.

The \$7 million that is outlined in the budget statements and the promotional material is inaccurate because the Mackay Regional Council co-contributed half of that funding on the back of the former leader, the member for Nanango, who made that commitment after the last election. It is fantastic and I thank and recognise Mackay Regional Council for their contribution.

This budget also delivered no water infrastructure. I see the minister there on the other side of the House. I have written to both the minister and the Deputy Prime Minister because Urannah Dam is ready to go. It is ready to go to deliver water security for the Whitsundays. It is ready to go to deliver renewable energy. It is also ready to go to ensure agriculture across our community is supported and expanded.

It is also disappointing to see no new tourism infrastructure. I would like to recognise the hard work of my RTO, the way in which they engage partnerships with Tourism and Events Queensland and the private sector.

I want to take this opportunity to also acknowledge a very successful event hosted by Kev Collins and Fish D'vine recently which was the White on Whitehaven, a fantastic event.

I would also like to take the opportunity to recognise the leadership of our Tourism Whitsundays CEO, Tash Wheeler, who tendered her resignation yesterday and will be finishing up with the organisation in September. Tash and Pete came to the Whitsundays in 2013. She has grown brand Whitsundays. Her family has grown during that time. She has demonstrated tremendous leadership on the back of COVID and the impacts on the tourism sector. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of everyone in the Whitsundays community and the broader state tourism community to recognise her efforts.

Today is the show holiday in Mackay. I know the member for Mackay would be, like me, wishing we were there, perhaps not sharing any fairy floss together, but certainly engaging with our local show community. Tomorrow it is the local show holiday in Proserpine which is a very exciting event. Cyclone Debbie caused significant disruption and destruction to the grounds, in particular to the pavilion. During the election, I committed to funding the final stage of the pavilion project upgrade. Unfortunately, the state Labor government decided not to fund our rural regional show.

An opposition member: That is just mean.

Ms CAMM: It is mean, but the member for Dawson was able to speak to Minister Littleproud and was able to meet that funding shortfall. They will be opening that on Friday.

I also want to take this opportunity to recognise Brooklyn Lade, India Lade, Georgia Camm, Grace McDonald and Meg Wilson who raised \$30,000 at the recent Proserpine Show Ball which will go a long way to upgrade those facilities. The night was a huge success. Those young women made an enormous contribution in fundraising and it is something which will now be locked into the annual calendar. With the Proserpine Show opening tomorrow, I would like to wish Donna Rogers and her committee all the best as well.

Overall, this budget was disappointing, to say the least, for the people of Whitsundays, but I will continue to fight for the priority projects that are important and continue to advocate for the fair share that we deserve in rural and regional Queensland.