



Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Community Support and Services Committee, Report**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.45 pm): I too acknowledge the work of the committee. In particular, I acknowledge the chair, the member for Mansfield, who was fantastic on the day. I certainly felt like I had adequate time to ask questions and that it was fair and reasonable. I acknowledge the work of the committee members.

I highlight that the amendments to the Youth Justice Act 1992 that took effect on 30 April 2021 have not significantly decreased crime across our state when it comes to youth offenders. During estimates it was also uncovered that GPS monitoring devices have not been utilised since that legislation was reintroduced and endorsed by this House. For four suitably assessed youth the courts made GPS monitoring non-conditional so we have seen zero GPS monitoring devices utilised across our state. We see that 92 young people have committed more than 30 offences whilst out on bail. This only reinforces the opposition's call for breach of bail to be reintroduced not just for the communities in Townsville and Far North Queensland but also in South-East Queensland where the community is in support of the opposition's call.

Within youth justice we saw \$7.7 million allocated over four years for drug and alcohol services, including a 10-bed residential facility. While I welcome that funding and support—because we know that drug and alcohol contributes greatly to the complex needs of young people—I made it clear to the minister that there is an expectation that regional and rural placements would be made available for young people across the state.

In the child safety budget we saw 20 per cent of the budget or almost \$309.2 million allocated to foster and kinship care. With over 12,000 people in out-of-home care that figure barely goes far enough. Some 87 per cent of high-risk children are being cared for by foster and kinship carers, of which 20 per cent have a disability. Access to services, the bureaucracy and the challenges that I am hearing about from foster and kinship carers—that is, the paperwork, the paper trail and the permissions needed—when they are trying to access care and support for children who need it desperately needs to be reviewed by the department. I urge the minister to take that up with the director-general. This was pointed out when engaging with foster carers in Townsville recently.

There has been an increase in representation of Indigenous youth requiring protective orders of 5.4 per 1,000. It has increased from 52.4 to 57.8. The minister so rightly acknowledged that there is more to do. I think for our First Nations peoples there is far more to do. Right now this government has let them down when it comes to COVID vaccinations. We continue to see increased demand when it comes to children and families with complex needs across our Indigenous communities.

Never will I ever stop saying this young child's name—Mason Jett Lee. We say it so we remember and we ensure that that tragedy never, ever occurs again. The LNP asked questions of the minister about the recommendations which came out of that coronial inquest where the Coroner determined that the department had failed Mason. As a result, the Public Service Commission ordered that a review be conducted into the disciplinary decisions of the department which did identify grossly inadequate misconduct.

The Public Service Commission mandated that the department seek independent legal advice from Crown Law on complex disciplinary matters for the next two years. I will continue to ask the question about how many times the department needs to seek Crown Law advice. The director-general was able to confirm that in the last 12 months advice was sought on five matters. The department of child safety will be monitored by another entity when it comes to these matters. This has demonstrated the need for us always to uphold process, to ensure transparency and to ensure that young people—our most vulnerable—are always protected.

The LNP will continue to stand up in a respectful bipartisan way for our most vulnerable in our communities but also hold this government to account to its investment and to its responsibility as guardian of these young people.