



Speech By
Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the budget estimates report of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. While I note the trip down memory lane that the Attorney has just shared with me given that I was not a member of this House back in 2012, I would like to equally remind her that it was in fact the LNP government that instigated the *Not now, not ever* report and initiative, which has now been adopted and implemented by the Labor government. What a great piece of work that was, led by Quentin Bryce, which went a long way in supporting women across our great state.

I would also like to outline that the \$25.6 million that was contributed by the Scott Morrison coalition government in response to COVID-19 and domestic and family violence was very much welcomed by our state of Queensland. It was disappointing that the Queensland government co-contributed only \$7.5 million as part of their COVID response to domestic and family violence. In comparison, the Victorian government contributed \$20 million, which equated to an 65 per cent proportion of the federal government's contribution, leaving Queensland's contribution at only 29 per cent. I think we still have a long way to go before we can be lecturing other sides of the House about how we are funding domestic and family violence equally across the states in this nation.

I would also like to highlight that, since 2016, under the current Labor government there has been no increase to core funding which services across the Queensland domestic violence service network have been advocating for. It was pleasing to hear the director-general outline that in the current negotiation of service agreements they would consider looking at the reporting methods, including outputs and the increased administration burden that is being felt by services that are under enormous pressure on the back of COVID-19 and the impacts of continued lockdowns and uncertainty. In particular, Cairns has seen an increase of 200 per cent in demand for women's legal services on the back of those impacts.

I would also like to outline that the angst felt amongst the service sector—in particular on the back of the \$7.5 million in COVID additional funding—was very challenging during the budget process. When the government announced the \$7.5 million would continue, the department neglected to communicate that formally with individual services across our state. The consequences of that led services across our state to make HR decisions and project decisions because of the level of uncertainty delivered from this Labor government. It was noted that decisions were made on notifying services of

the extension of their funding in the last week of the financial year. Many of those services—non-government and not-for-profit organisations that operate with volunteer boards—deserve a high level of respect from this Labor government and an understanding that they are dealing with significant demand for services, not just on the back of COVID-19 but, at the government's own admission, due to population growth across our state.

I would also like to highlight that, while we welcomed investment in refuges, it has taken almost six years for the minister, along with the housing minister, to convene a housing crisis round table for women and children fleeing domestic violence across this state. In relation to the housing round table, the minister was not able to outline what outcomes were to be achieved, what goals were set and any time frames for deliverables. We continue to watch that space.

Without a doubt, in terms of the housing crisis, domestic and family violence is having significant impacts on women's economic security across our state. We know that the displacement of families, and in particular children, is the most contributing factor for homelessness. Just on the pet-friendly refuges, while the minister did outline and confirm that this government has invested \$100,000, it does not compare to the \$500,000 that we see New South Wales contribute, nor does it compare to the \$1.3 million that we see Victoria contribute.

We fall behind our state counterparts when it comes to investing in women, children and the prevention of domestic and family violence. I certainly hope that through the national partnership agreement the government can make a greater contribution to what is a significant need across our community.