



Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.40 am): As a member of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, I rise to address the appropriation bill debate today. In doing so, can I start by acknowledging the two contributions that were made before me. You would be hard pressed to find—in fact, you could not find—a more passionate advocate for matters pertaining to family and domestic violence than the member for Mudgeeraba. There is nothing I can add to the contribution she just gave. I encourage the government to listen again to her contribution and act before we have another tragic circumstance, as we experienced earlier this week.

I also want to acknowledge the member for Noosa. I am not going to repeat her contribution because I was watching the member for Sandgate getting itchy in his seat about pre-empting debate in a motion tonight. It was pleasing to hear members of the crossbench reiterating the calls of the opposition around how estimates functioned this year. I look forward to that debate this evening on what we might be doing to better address it.

Moving to the actual proceedings on the day, there are a number of things I would like to specifically look at that pertain to the electorate of Glass House. Whilst every member will welcome commitments around 2,025 additional police officers, there were significant concerns raised around this government's ability to actually deliver on that in five years. I do not want this to be a false promise. We need those extra police officers in the electorate of Glass House. Therefore, I want them trained and I want them on the beat within that five years. I do not want us to be at an election in 2024 wondering where all those police officers are.

It was also not surprising—as we had suspected it all along—to receive confirmation that many of our police resources were being redirected to monitoring the borders, and that included a lot of our proactive policing duties, particularly around road policing. Coincidentally, and not surprisingly, the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay hinterlands have been visited by many road users during COVID, with the vast majority of them doing the right thing. In another surprising twist of COVID, with a lot more discretionary funds around, a lot more people have bought Harleys, superbikes and hotted up Japanese imported vehicles, and my part of the world tends to be where they want to come.

Without the road policing units on our roads, we have seen a huge explosion in very unsafe and basically disruptive behaviour on our hinterland roads. Now that the road policing units are back, and having had conversations with both of the district officers who cover the electorate of Glass House, I

am confident we will be seeing a greater presence. To the residents on roads like Bald Knob Road, Hunchy Road, all of the roads that have 'Maleny' in them and Mount Mee Road, please know that some help is coming and hopefully we will see action taken very shortly.

Like other speakers, I have some concern around the admission by the Police Commissioner that, as a result of the QPS strategic review, there will be a closure of certain policing services like police beats. Glass House does not have a police beat. We are lucky to have the few police stations that we do. What we do want to see—and we are reassured around this idea—is mobile units being placed in some of the areas that are in between stations. I think of places like Mooloolah Valley, Beerburrum or Wamuran that are between stations and that desperately need a very physical presence of police from time to time. Those mobile units will be very much welcomed, and the sooner they can be rolled out the better.

I turn now to corrective services. It is no surprise—and we knew it back when the LNP was in government—that we are facing an increase in inmates. In fact since 2015 there has been a 29 per cent increase in the number of prisoners in custody and that has led to an extraordinary amount of overcrowding. There were reports in media outlets over the weekend of what that means for Woodford. What it actually means is an increase in prisoner-on-officer actions that are resulting in officers being injured, in many cases very severely, and officers having to take time off work to recover. Every one of our government employees deserves to work in a safe environment, and that goes for our custodial officers in our correctional centres. More work needs to be done by our government. Had they enacted our plans to grow the number of correctional centres we would not be in this problem, but because they sit on their hands we are.