



Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**

**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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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 McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.47 am): I also acknowledge the member for Mudgeeraba and her contributions. I admire her courage and her continued pursuit of those very important issues.

It was my great honour to be newly appointed to serve as the chair of the Community Support and Services Committee as we considered the Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020 and the estimates of the committee's areas of responsibility, which include the portfolio areas of community, housing, digital economy, the arts, seniors, disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, children, youth justice and multicultural affairs. The Palaszczuk government's budget is a jobs budget. We have said for more than a year now that a strong health response will allow for a strong economic response and a record investment in infrastructure—job-creating infrastructure.

Estimates is a necessary process allowing all members of parliament—in particular, non-government members—to question members of the executive and senior public servants on the array of positive programs and initiatives being delivered by this Palaszczuk government. I felt professionally empathetic and embarrassed for the opposition members of the Community Support and Services Committee as they were continually denied the opportunity to ask questions by their self-assured, learned scholars.

Transparency and accountability are the hallmark of a good government, and I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government. Estimates provides members opportunities to explore areas of government spending, and the facts speak for themselves. On review of *Hansard* and on a rough calculation of questions, I have been advised that the committee sat for seven hours and 33 minutes, of which three hours and 52 minutes were allocated to non-government questioning, compared to two hours and 53 minutes of questioning by the government. This was deliberate on my behalf as chair. Further evidence that ample scrutiny of the government's budget was afforded to the opposition was that, of the 165 questions that were asked, just 45 questions were asked by government members and 120 questions were asked by non-government members. Again, this was a deliberate intention on my part as chair of this committee.

As a long-term employee with the Public Service, I am well aware of the degree of rigour that exists regarding the expenditure of public money, as there should be. As elected officials, we should strive every day to ensure that public money is expended for the benefit of all Queenslanders. The estimates process is a vital process to allow all members, in particular the non-government members, to hold the government to account.

I see in my community firsthand the record investments in the arts, housing, communities, disability, multiculturalism and youth justice. The benefits of the expenditure noted during estimates included: under the department of communities, the more than \$1 million supporting the proactive job readiness programs offered by the Mount Gravatt Community Centre; certificate courses that will assist the long-term unemployed or women who have been out of the work environment as a result of family responsibilities; the Australian first, Ways to Wellness program developed in Mansfield in conjunction with the University of Queensland and the Queensland Community Alliance; the \$21.2 million allocated to the new performing arts venue at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, which will be frequented by my community; the housing provided to members of my community under the Queensland Housing Strategy 2021-2027; through access to the Seniors Card, concessions such as electricity, rates, gas and water; or community transport services for those who live with a disability. These are amongst the many investments made by the Palaszczuk government to ensure the economic recovery of our great state. I take this opportunity to thank the large number of public servants who prepared the comprehensive briefs for ministers and senior officials on all matters relating to the Palaszczuk government's budget.

Finally, I thank the three wonderful ministers that I served: the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, the Hon. Craig Crawford and the Hon. Leanne Linard. It is an absolute pleasure to serve these great leaders. I also thank the committee secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process. I commend report No. 2 of the Community Support and Services Committee to the 57th Parliament.