



Speech By  
**Cynthia Lui**

**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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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 LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.01 pm): I rise to speak on the 2021-2022 budget estimates. The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021 for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. I acknowledge and thank our ministers: Minister Enoch, Minister Crawford and Minister Linard, committee chair Corrine McMillan, members of the committee, committee secretariat, Hansard and all those involved to make the estimates process a successful one.

Queenslanders have lived with the challenges of COVID-19 for the best part of 18 months now. The reality of the situation, entering uncharted waters, gave us no guarantee what was in front of us let alone what Queensland would look like 18 months from the onset of our very first case. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank our Chief Health Officer Dr Jeannette Young and our Premier for standing up for and with Queenslanders during the pandemic. What Queenslanders needed in this time of uncertainty was compassion. Our CHO and Premier brought with them compassion banded together by world-class expert medical advice and strong leadership. They never once strayed away from their commitment to keep Queenslanders safe, and today we are in a better place for it. I am proud to say that we have the best of the best in our corner in our Chief Health Officer, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk, Deputy Premier Steven Miles, health minister Yvette D'Ath, all cabinet ministers, every single member of this government, our health and all frontline professionals, and government and non-government agencies. This government proved that a strong health response early in this pandemic has put Queensland in a strong position towards economic recovery. I am a firm believer that when you invest in people first you invest in the economy.

The Community Support and Services Committee estimates hearing was initially scheduled for 5 August but was pushed back to 13 August because of the COVID induced lockdown that affected 11 LGAs in SEQ and the three-day snap lockdown in Cairns and Yarrabah in Far North Queensland. The lockdown in FNQ was needed. It gave us valuable time to get on top of any community transmission and prevent a potential outbreak in the region. Thankfully, there was no community transmission. This government has proven once again that fast and hard measures absolutely work. When you go hard and go fast the results show in what we see now: the ability to move freely in our communities.

As we continue to work through the challenges of this pandemic, there is no denying that it is placing huge pressure on people's social and emotional wellbeing. Having support structures such as NGOs, neighbourhood and community centres, and homelessness service providers helps deliver vital

services to those most in need in our communities. I am particularly proud of the Palaszczuk government's housing investment as we continue to work towards addressing homelessness by delivering safe and affordable homes in Queensland. The \$2.9 billion announced underpins the new Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, and \$1.9 billion will enable us to fast-track and deliver 7,400 new social and affordable homes.

I will never forget how the federal LNP government wiped their hands clean from delivering safe and affordable homes in remote discrete communities with absolutely no future funding committed. The 2021-22 Queensland government state budget includes more than \$317 million to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the state, with \$212.4 million to improve social housing and deliver housing services in discrete communities, reaffirming our commitment to closing the gap for First Nations people across the state.

Prior to walking into parliament I worked for an Indigenous organisation overseeing the child protection unit that delivered family support to vulnerable children and families throughout FNQ. If there is one thing I would love to see, it would be a decrease in the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth engaged in the child protection and youth justice system. The \$124.4 million investment to deliver family support is critical to prevent children from entering statutory child protection, and our family wellbeing services are seeing high levels of success in de-escalating risks and addressing needs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. This government investment to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth engaged in the system gives me hope for the future that, as a government, we continue to address the over-representation of First Nations children and youth in Queensland.

We are doing so much in the multicultural affairs sector as well as the arts. It is all about creating opportunities for an inclusive society for all. I stand with this government in all that we are doing to create a safe and inclusive society for everyone here in Queensland in working with those who are most vulnerable. I commend this report to the House.