



Speech By
Hon. Leanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (2.30 pm): Firstly, I would like to offer my thanks to the members of the committee, parliamentary staff and officers from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy who supported the estimates process this year. I welcome the committee's recommendation that the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

The Palaszczuk government has a clear vision for Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery. In my portfolio we support some of Queensland's most vulnerable people. There is no greater demonstration of this commitment than our record \$2.9 billion investment, including the establishment of the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund for more social and affordable housing.

Under the new Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, \$1.9 billion will be invested in more social housing, supporting vulnerable Queenslanders and helping end homelessness. The new Housing Investment Fund will drive current and future supply of new social housing in partnership with community housing providers, non-government organisations and the private sector.

We know that there are vulnerable Queenslanders who need a home. That is why the Palaszczuk government is fast-tracking more housing. We will commence 7,400 new social and affordable homes across Queensland over the next four years. There is also \$40 million over two years for 1,000 head leases to get more Queenslanders into homes faster.

Despite this significant investment, which should have been the subject of scrutiny during the committee's budget estimates hearing, it was incredibly disappointing to see the behaviour of the member for Everton. During questioning around the housing register data, the member made a huge fuss, arguing that he had asked for 2020-21 data, which he knows is not yet publicly available, when in fact *Hansard* shows that he did not ask for 2020-21 data. The LNP have been so arrogant about this interaction that they even mentioned the member for Everton's mistake in their statement of reservation. Instead of acknowledging that the error was in the question that had been asked, they tried to blame others. I guess if you are caught making a mistake, the LNP playbook says that you have to back it in and spin it the best you can.

I have written to the committee chair about my concerns that the member for Everton has breached the Code of Ethical Standards and offended the standing orders by attempting to mislead the committee about the nature of this questioning, and I will await the committee's deliberation on the member's actions. It is important that this House be made aware of the appalling manner in which the member for Everton reflected on the director-general of my department and the unprofessional way he conducted himself during this part of the committee hearing. The member's shirtfronting, standover, aggro style is really wearing thin, and his aggression, particularly toward women, is a concern.

The poor behaviour of the member for Everton was almost matched by the dreadful behaviour of the member for Maroochydore, who seemed to revel in verbally attacking the director-general of my department. This attitude towards public servants is appalling but not—

Ms SIMPSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I know the minister cannot play the gender card against me, but I take offence. It is untrue and offensive—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Members, I will hear the point of order in silence.

Ms SIMPSON: It is untrue and offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask that you withdraw.

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw. This attitude towards public servants is appalling but not unexpected from the LNP, given the way they cut and sacked public servants last time they were in government.

During the remainder of the hearing, the committed noted that COVID-19 has had a lasting and widespread effect on our communities. The state budget includes \$11.3 million this financial year to continue key services through the pandemic, such as the 134COVID, 13HEALTH and community recovery hotlines and the state government's dedicated COVID-19 website. The Check In Qld app and border pass are crucial tools in our fight against COVID-19 and have been developed by my department in concert with Queensland Health to keep Queenslanders safe.

Queenslanders also know that the arts and cultural sector has been hard-hit by COVID-19. The Palaszczuk government has committed \$79 million since March 2020 to support these vital sectors through this pandemic. This includes the \$22.5 million Arts and Cultural Recovery Package and a further \$7 million for the state's live music industry. This is a sector that injects some \$8.5 billion into the state's economy and supports more than 92,000 jobs for Queenslanders. The Palaszczuk government is a strong supporter of the arts, and that is why we have committed \$287.6 million to the arts portfolio in 2021-22.

This budget also recognises the importance of cybersecurity measures, with an investment of \$11 million over the next two years. This is in addition to the \$20.3 million already allocated from 2019-20 through to 2022-23.

I am absolutely proud to stand here and again demonstrate the Palaszczuk government's commitment to investment in services that Queenslanders need and that support our communities, create jobs and boost our economic recovery as we respond to COVID-19. I am particularly proud of the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing, with our \$2.9 billion investment over the next four years and the establishment of the \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund, the first of its kind in this state. I thank the committee for its report and I commend the report to the House.