



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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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**

#### **Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.27 am): I thank the House for the chance to speak on the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's 2020-21 budget estimates report. I want to start by saying what a privilege it is as Queensland's Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence to provide my first report on the progress of this government's commitment to fostering safer communities.

As I said to the committee, I want to thank each of our courts, our heads of jurisdiction. They did a phenomenal job during COVID to try to move things along in the justice system, to respond to challenges, to keep people's access to justice going. That exceptional work continues as we remain in the global pandemic's shadows. I am also very proud of our upgrades to courthouses such as the \$1.6 million domestic and family violence upgrade at the Pine Rivers courthouse. I was there recently with the member for Pine Rivers. Investing in our courthouses and in infrastructure upgrades to provide safer spaces for women experiencing domestic and family violence is something I am incredibly proud of.

I am also very proud of our government's record in tackling domestic and family violence. As I reported to the committee, much work has been done but there is always more to do. That is why again I have to say I was incredibly disappointed with the member for Whitsunday's contribution to the debate last night. She described our government's approach to tackling domestic and family violence as 'laissez faire' which is just outrageous given the amount of work that we have been doing to tackle domestic and family violence and the investment that we are making, particularly last year during the COVID crisis when one in 10 Australian women experienced domestic and family violence—one in 10 Australian women in a relationship—with two-thirds saying that the violence started or became worse during COVID.

We know how important it is to work with the sector and take the time to get things right. I want to say to the member for Whitsunday that I would welcome her contribution to the work we are doing to listen to stakeholders and the sector to make sure we get the right laws that will keep women safe and hold perpetrators to account. This issue deserves bipartisan support. I look forward to working not only with those opposite but with the sector and legal experts to get this right.

I also want to address the contribution in this debate of the member for Clayfield, who has described our department as on the 'go-slow'. We are still working incredibly hard to fix the mess we were left with after the member for Kawana was the attorney-general, including the fact that the LNP cut 507 full-time-equivalent staff from DJAG. That takes a while to fix. Abolishing specialist courts takes time to fix. I am absolutely committed to making sure we continue the work to fix the mess that those opposite left. They not only cut 500 full-time equivalents and all of the specialist courts, including the Murri Court and the Special Circumstances Court, but they also outsourced court reporting, which is a mess we are still trying to fix. Whilst the member for Clayfield continues to criticise the hardworking public servants in my department, they have been working hard to fix the mess that the member for Kawana left. I am incredibly proud of the work we have done since we have been in government to turn that around, including reopening those specialist courts which really do make a difference to so many Queenslanders.

I am proud to be part of a government that invests in important services to keep Queensland safe. I want to thank my department, the statutory bodies and the team for their assistance with my first estimates hearing. I want to thank the committee chair, Peter Russo, and all committee members. I commend the report to the House.