



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation 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) (12.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's 2020-21 budget estimates report. It was my privilege during this year's estimates hearing to talk to the exceptional work being done across the justice system and the important work that the Palaszczuk government continues to do to keep Queensland women and children safe. The ongoing safety and welfare of Queenslanders is a key priority of this government. We make no apologies for investing in areas that protect Queenslanders.

That stands in stark contrast to those opposite. Their statement to the committee report and their line of questions during the hearing speaks volumes on their inability to support and protect Queenslanders. If the member for Maroochydore does not understand the operational details of the CCC can I suggest she write a letter to the CCC instead of wasting valuable time during a hearing—after all, she is the shadow minister for integrity. The member for Clayfield was quick to jump up and down, suddenly concerned about funding for Queensland's justice services like Legal Aid Queensland. I am not sure I need to remind him that he was the treasurer when the LNP were last in government and they cut funding to Legal Aid—and not just Legal Aid; they cut funding to the CCC, the OIC and Victim Assist Queensland.

It was the LNP that abolished specialist courts. It was an LNP-led government that cut 507 full-time jobs from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. It is a bit rich for those opposite to feign concern for Queensland's justice system. The former attorney-general, the member for Kawana, could not even manage to arrive at the hearing on time to ask a question. It was quite a bizarre appearance, I have to say.

The statement from the opposition included in the committee's report does reek a little of desperation. I would remind those opposite that it is not an admission to say that the DPP and the CCC are always looking at how they can improve their processes. In fact, that is a basic tenet of responsible government.

I know that the member of Whitsunday was not a part of the LNP government, but she asked about domestic and family violence at the hearing. I take the opportunity to remind her and the House of the LNP's record. It was those on the opposite side of the House who slashed funding to critical frontline domestic and family violence services. This included: \$150,000 cut from the Domestic Violence

Prevention Centre on the Gold Coast; \$40,000 cut from DV Connect; \$68,000 cut from North Queensland Combined Women's Services; over \$50,000 cut from the Ipswich Women's Centre Against Domestic Violence; \$51,000 cut from Family Emergency Accommodation Townsville; over \$38,000 cut from the Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service; \$33,000 cut from the Centre Against Sexual Violence; \$40,000 cut from the Domestic Violence Resource Service in Mackay; almost \$30,000 cut from the Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre; and \$38,000 cut from the Migrant Women's Emergency Support Service.

The member for Whitsunday also raised concerns about a lack of pet friendly refuges. Again, I take the opportunity to remind the member that it was this government that opened the first new refuges in Queensland in over 20 years. It is this government that has invested in and upgraded refuges, including the recently opened Macleod Refuge on the Gold Coast that now has several pet friendly apartments so women can keep their pets with them in times of crisis. We are investing \$160.9 million to provide housing and specialist homelessness services for vulnerable people, especially older women.

The member for South Brisbane wasted valuable time complaining about not having enough time to ask questions yet it seems she was asking the wrong minister questions about housing policy. She had to repeat that question the next day at a completely different committee, wasting even more valuable time.

There are two members I have not mentioned yet—two members who were sadly missed due to their absence. I should say that the member for Glass House was present however could not even be bothered to ask me or my officials a question, so he probably should have stayed home. Then there was the member for Mudgeeraba, the shadow minister for women. In typical LNP fashion—the party that has such a long way to go in terms of women representation—the shadow minister for women did not even show up to ask a question about how we are putting women front and centre of our economic recovery.

I want to thank the committee chair, who did a fabulous job as always, and all the committee members for their contributions during this estimates hearing—

**Ms SIMPSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the minister should know about the convention of not referring to members who were not present because they can have very valid reasons for not being present.

**Ms Pease:** In the chamber.

**Ms SIMPSON:** It extends also to the committees, so it is an abuse of that convention.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Maroochydore. I will take some advice on that. Minister, there is a convention against referring to members' absences from the House. Some would argue that that also extends to members' absences in committees. I ask you to refrain from further reference to that.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I also acknowledge the secretariat and the parliamentary staff who did a fantastic job operating under the circumstances of COVID-19. It would not be easy to make sure that so many people were socially distanced, and I thank them for all their work. I commend the report to the House.