



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

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

#### **Appropriation Bill**

#### **Health and Environment Committee, Report**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (4.45 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Environment Committee report into budget estimates, as examined by members of the opposition, government and crossbench. The committee had the opportunity to hear ministers respond to a range of questions put to them by all those who attended. I thank members for their contributions. I also thank the ministers and the chief executives for the way they articulated their responses during estimates. I say to the member for Mudgeeraba that we saw an improvement in the way some members conducted themselves, with only a few warnings required. Let us hope that standard is maintained for the rest of this term at least. It was just lovely!

I want to touch on the statements of reservation. I think there was some generic cutting and pasting. I will start with the statement from the deputy chair. Straight out of the LNP crisis playbook, there were mentions of a housing crisis, youth crisis, cost-of-living crisis, integrity crisis, health crisis—it is a bit lazy. Can members opposite talk about something with regard to health? It is a 'chair crisis'; it is a 'cloud crisis'. If it was the member for Kawana it would be a 'hair crisis'! Everything is a crisis, according to those opposite. They have no plans and did not take the opportunity to address what we are doing as members of the government.

I have heard members of the opposition talk about protection rackets and so on. I am advised that in our 6½-hour estimates hearing government members got not quite two hours while non-government members and crossbenchers got four hours. Some 180 questions were asked; only 29 were asked by government members while 151 were from the opposition. I think I was pretty generous in terms of sharing time on the day.

I want to start by talking about the health session. The Minister for Health, the director-general and many of the CEOs from the HHSs provided responses, as did the commissioner of the QAS. They spoke of the total budget expenditure, which includes a record \$22 billion funding for Health and Ambulance. Both received an increase. There was an increase of \$1.5 billion in the 2022-23 budget. According to the SDS, increased expenditure for controlled items reflects the workforce requirements to meet the ongoing growth in demand for frontline health services. This is something our government is very proud to have delivered. This includes, of course, the ongoing response to the management of COVID-19. It would be remiss of me not to recognise every health worker in this state for their incredible work over the last couple of years in managing the health pandemic.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** We do not want to talk about opening borders, though, do we?

There is record funding for the Townsville HHS, with an increased allocation of 6.53 per cent. This is fantastic, because it means \$40 million is allocated to the Kirwan health precinct. I am working with the health minister and all of the relevant stakeholders to see that new facility delivered for our health workers in Townsville.

I thank Minister Scanlon for the afternoon session in which the areas of her portfolio were examined, including budget highlights for the Department of Environment and Science—over \$964 million over five years as part of the 10-year, \$2.1 billion waste package to support councils. I know how much our council in Townsville appreciates that. There was significant funding with regard to the Queensland koala conservation strategy. Everyone loves koalas.

**Mr O'Connor** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** Thank you for your time, Sam!

*(Time expired)*