



Speech By
Amanda Camm


MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 23 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.09 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to assure you that I do not plan to incorporate my response to the appropriation bills because I truly believe, and I think that this is very important, that the people we represent in this House—our constituents and the taxpayers of Queensland—expect us to stand up and speak for the allocated time.

I look forward to making my contribution in regard to not only my shadow portfolio, which I think is very important—women’s economic security, the prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence and child protection—but also the good people of the Whitsundays. Today I speak in support of the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, and in particular his comments that ‘too often these statements: to be safe, to be respected, to be equal’ are taken for granted. Women are crying out for genuine reform, genuine policy and, in fact, action. It was disappointing to read through the budget and look at the detail in terms of the women’s economic security statement. In fact, if we total the amount spent on specific projects for women’s economic security, it barely cracks \$1 million. How uninspiring for the women of Queensland. The women’s participation rate still lags at 63.7 per cent compared to men’s at 70.9 per cent. This government continues to pay lip-service. In fact, we need to shift the paradigm in relation to women’s economic security in this state. That is certainly what the Leader of the Opposition did today in his budget reply speech. It is about inspiration, not victimisation. It is about new ideas, innovation, entrepreneurship and empowering women. It is in fact about empowering men. It is about equality and accessibility.

I am afraid to say that what the Treasurer delivered in his budget statement was short on inspiration. That is for sure. I will demonstrate that by way of comparison between New South Wales—which presented its budget this week—and Queensland. Queensland has a general housing fund. In New South Wales there is almost \$500 million specifically for women and children fleeing their homes. In Queensland we are helping women return to work with the Back to Work program, but there is no budget line item. For New South Wales there is \$32 million and \$5,000 grants to help women as they return to work, including covering costs around technology, training and wardrobes. This is an actual, real, tangible, practical investment for women in New South Wales, but not here in Queensland.

In relation to innovation, entrepreneurial start-up and support, in Queensland there is \$890,000 in the Female Founders program for which we are grateful. There is \$39.1 million over four years to fund the small business grants and the Mentoring for Growth program. Again, this is not specific to females but goes to all small businesses, which we also recognise. I point out that in New South Wales there is \$12 million towards the Carla Zampatti venture capital fund for start-ups led by women for women. There is \$11.5 million towards tailored support to help women build and grow their businesses—recognition of the contribution of women.

There is support for women in the construction industry. I thought those opposite would actually embrace such a policy; in fact not. In New South Wales there is \$20.2 million towards achieving 15 per cent of construction workers being women by 2030. There are no targets from those opposite in Queensland. In terms of child care and kindergarten, there is a shameful \$263 million over four years to support universal access to kindergarten. In New South Wales there is \$1.7 billion for introducing universal kindergarten.

Mr O'Connor: A billion.

Ms CAMM: I take that interjection. It is a real recognition.

Mr O'Connor: Sterlo went and did it.

Ms CAMM: I take that interjection. Do we know why? Because the New South Wales Liberal government recognise that child care is actually an investment in productivity not just to women but also to men. Where is the funding? There is zero from this government.

Mr Stevens: Crime is out of control.

Ms CAMM: I will take that interjection: crime is certainly out of control. I look forward to getting to that in my speech on the budget. I just heard the member for Thuringowa talk about payroll tax and the mental health levy. I will report to this House how privileged I was to hear of the bipartisan and committed approach of members of both sides—and I pay respect to Joe Kelly, the member for Greenslopes, as chair, and also our deputy chair, Rob Molhoek, the member for Southport—during a very tough and very serious mental health committee in Queensland. It was so disappointing to hear the Treasurer politicise mental health in this state. As raised by the mental health committee—not by those opposite—this committee was almost set up to ensure that the Treasurer could make the revenue needed to cover the shortfall in investment over the last seven years in the mental health system in this state. When there are zero adolescent teenage beds in this state north of—

Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Miller, I believe that that was unparliamentary language. I invite you to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw.

Ms CAMM: There are zero adolescent mental health beds in this state north of Noosa. There are zero beds for teenagers with eating disorders north of Noosa. For the last seven years there were zero beds for mental health across regional and rural Queensland. The Treasurer undoing all 57 important recommendations of this committee by politicising a serious issue in this state was absolutely appalling.

I also highlight in the budget papers that it does not matter how many millions of dollars this state government throws at the child protection system. We still have over 11,000 children living in care and over 5,700 carers in this state caring for children in this state, and 53 children died at the hands of this state last year. With all the resources of government, with all the millions of dollars, we still have a child protection system that is failing. Where are the interjections now from those opposite? There is silence. Why is that?

I will speak to my own electorate, the electorate of Whitsunday. I am very proud to represent its fastest growing suburb, the Northern Beaches, where I reside with my family. I draw to the transport minister's attention that there is one access road in and out. I am sure my community welcomed the same \$700,000 or \$600,000 allocated—sorry \$375,000 this year and \$375,000 next year. There is zero capital funding for the fastest growing community in the Mackay region. I see the member for Mackay in the chamber. I welcome any advocacy that she might like to provide for those Northern Beaches communities of Rural View, Blacks Beach, Bucasia and Shoal Point. We will see growth of 53.6 per cent, 10,000 residents, by 2036. There are no upgrades to the roundabouts, no upgrades to bottlenecks and no funding.

While I am raising the 'efforts' of TMR, I highlight to the minister that, out of every government department that I or my office engages with, TMR is not willing to engage, consult or attend community meetings—not in the Northern Beaches of Mackay nor Shute Harbour. I recommend that the minister go and speak to his regional office about the fact they are not willing to engage with the local member.

Mr O'Connor: Get him on Twitter.

Ms CAMM: I should maybe tweet the minister. There are countless examples of their lack of engagement. We have good people who work in that department who are forbidden to speak to their local member. It is incredible.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Whitsunday, please resume your seat. I am not in the business of prohibiting interjections, but the level of interjections is too high from both sides. I generally warn members and ask that the member be allowed to be heard.

Ms CAMM: I would like to speak very frankly about the Shute Harbour boat ramp and the Midge Point boat ramp and the lack of consultation with council and the lack of engagement with those in the community and our fishing community. It is appalling. I see 12 year olds at the boat ramp in waist deep water where we have Irukandji jellyfish, sharks and crocodiles. I beg the minister to come to Shute Harbour and have a look at that. It is on this government's head if I have a death in the Shute Harbour marina. It is a serious issue.

Government members interjected.

Ms CAMM: City MPs can laugh all they want, but they are out of touch.

Government members interjected.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have just reminded members about my tolerance level for interjections. There are too many. I am struggling to hear the member on her feet.

Ms CAMM: I should take personal offence to the interjection 'gutter politics' given the deaths we have had from jellyfish in my electorate more recently, but I am actually above that—unlike some of those opposite. I would love the member for Pine Rivers to come and visit my local surf club where we have had a death from a jellyfish. I would welcome any member opposite who wanted to come and meet my local volunteers who have tried to save the lives of people who have lost their lives due to jellyfish. How appalling! That just shows how out of touch those opposite are with regional and rural Queensland.

I would like to highlight the enormous efforts of my local tourism bodies—Tourism Whitsunday and Mackay Isaac Tourism. I congratulate chair of Tourism Whitsunday Julie Telford and CEO Rick Hamilton and chair of Mackay Isaac Tourism Justin Englert and interim CEO Tash Wheeler on the collaborative approach they have taken to advocacy and bringing together the very successful Mackay Beach Horse Races. I know this will be a signature event for our region. I certainly hope the minister can attend next time. It was branded 'Definitely not the Melbourne Cup'. I congratulate Sound Australia on its work. It is one of the best events our region has seen in many years.

It was a collaborative effort between both our RTOs. I urge the minister to listen. Do not reduce their funding. Do not merge them because I can assure the minister that the kangaroos on the beach that Qantas uses in advertising and the heart of the reef that the Premier likes to tout are very different brands and they need very different leadership styles. Please do not merge those two RTOs because the community does not want that and neither do those body.

I congratulate the tourism operators that have come through the enormous challenge of COVID-19. I am very proud of my local retails and my local chambers of commerce—Whitsunday Coast Chamber of Commerce and Mackay Region Chamber of Commerce—that have pulled together. Now we are on the other side of COVID, visitors are returning to our region, including those with German accents. We finally have backpackers in our retail shops and working in our local community. We are proud of the Whitsunday music festival and the Whitsundays Arts Festival. We are proud of our amazing global tourism brand. That is an asset to Queensland.

I also mention the Resources Centre of Excellence. The vision is that we are globally recognised as the hub of high-level thinking for all things related to the resources sector, therefore creating significant regional economic value and demonstrating exceptional social value in our communities. Our community certainly welcomes the funding of \$5.7 million over three years for that vision. I thank the government for that recognition. I acknowledge Steve Boxall the CEO and the board, many of whom I had the pleasure of working with when the RCOE was only a concept and I was the director of the Resource Industry Network. This funding will support the expansion of what is already a showcase facility across our community.

Mrs Gilbert: Great Labor government.

Ms CAMM: I will take that interjection. I will remind the member that it was the Mackay Regional Council that committed \$7 million to that. I was deputy mayor and we contributed to the land. I will not give the government credit for what was a signature project of council, but I will give credit to the government now for continuing that project. The member for Mackay had nothing to do with that project.

I will continue to support the mining sector even though this government has decided to increase royalties. I certainly hope that the increase in royalties does not impact the supply chain, the small businesses, the METS sector and those businesses in Paget that employ my locals from the Northern Beaches, Airlie Beach and Cannonvale. If they are impacted by the rise in royalties and those royalties are not returned to the region—not returned to Proserpine Hospital, Mackay Hospital or Moranbah Hospital—I will be holding this government to account and so will the voters of Mackay and the Whitsundays.