



Speech By
Corrine McMillan

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.01 pm): It was my great honour to serve as the chair of the Community Support and Services Committee as we considered the Appropriation Bill 2022 and the estimates of the committee's area of responsibility which includes a large portfolio: community, housing, digital economy, the arts, seniors, disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, children, youth justice and multicultural affairs. The Palaszczuk government's budget focuses on good jobs, better services and a great Queensland lifestyle. Estimates is a necessary process allowing all members of parliament, in particular non-government members, to question members of the executive and senior public servants on the array of positive programs and initiatives being delivered by this Palaszczuk government.

I felt professionally empathetic and embarrassed for the opposition members of the Community Support and Services Committee as they were continually denied the opportunity to ask questions by their self-assured learned scholar—namely, the member for Everton, whose conduct was somewhat improved on his behaviour during the 2021 estimates process although he still requires regular reminders that he is no longer working on a football field.

A spotlight is cast on the behaviour of politicians as our communities continue to grapple with issues of violence, particularly family and domestic violence. Rightly or wrongly, our male leaders have a responsibility to demonstrate and encourage respectful behaviours. I always enjoy working with the member for Surfers Paradise. We share significant history from when he was the minister for education and I have always acknowledged and appreciated his dignity and his decency. I also thank the member for Whitsunday for her contribution to the estimates process. Further, I acknowledge the professionalism of the deputy chair, the member for Burnett. It is an honour to work with him. I am very fortunate to lead an outstanding committee who work collegially, diligently, deliberately, ethically and industriously.

Transparency and accountability are the hallmark of good governments and I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government. Estimates provides members opportunities to explore areas of government spending and the facts speak for themselves. On a review of *Hansard* and on a rough calculation of questions, I have been advised that the committee sat for seven hours and 31 minutes, of which three hours and 49 minutes were allocated to non-government questioning compared to two hours and 52 minutes of questioning by the government. This was deliberate on my behalf as chair. Further evidence that ample scrutiny of the government's budget was afforded to the opposition was

that, of the 135 questions that were asked, just 41 questions were asked by government members and 94 questions were asked by non-government members. Again this was a deliberate intention on my part as chair of this committee.

As a long-term employee with the Public Service I am well aware of the degree of rigour that exists regarding the expenditure of public money, as there should be. As elected officials we should strive every day to ensure that public money is expended for the benefit of all Queenslanders. The estimates process is a vital process to allow all members, in particular non-government members, to hold the government to account.

I see in my community firsthand the record investments in the arts, housing, communities, disabilities, multiculturalism and youth justice. The benefits of expenditures noted during estimates included \$125.6 million over four years and nearly \$19 million ongoing to help address social isolation and loneliness and support neighbourhood and community centres throughout Queensland. This is an outcome of the inquiry that my committee conducted that I know every member of my committee, regardless of their political association, is proud of. This will result in an increase for our Mount Gravatt Community Centre's operational funding to \$233,643 per annum, up from around \$126,000. Further, the Mount Gravatt Community Centre will receive \$148,950 in 2022 for the continuation of their world-leading Ways to Wellness program.

The \$21.2 million allocated to the new performing arts venue at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, which will be frequented by my community and, of course, the housing providing to members of my community under the Queensland Housing Strategy 2021-2027, as well as numerous concessions to the elderly, are going to be much valued by my community.

These are amongst the many investments made by the Palaszczuk government to ensure the economic recovery of our great state. I take this opportunity to thank all of the public servants, the parliamentary staff, as well as the three ministers that I serve, for their great support and I commend report No. 18 to the 57th Parliament.