



Speech By
Jason Hunt

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (2.10 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution on report No. 29 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee as it pertains to the 2022-23 budget. I thank all members of the committee for the way the process unfolded this year. All members were given sufficient time to speak, including other members who were given leave to participate—including the member for Clayfield, the member for Whitsunday, the member for Burdekin, the member for Mudgeeraba and the member for Maiwar. A special note of thanks goes to the committee chair, Peter Russo, the member for Toohey. As acknowledged by Sandy Bolton, the member for Noosa, the chair allowed a sufficient amount of extra time for the opposition and crossbench to ask additional questions, and I will come back to those questions in a moment.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence spoke at length about the great strides this government is making across her portfolios: \$246 million to modernise the state's courthouses; a very welcome \$76 million over four years to bolster the services of Legal Aid Queensland; initiatives that include gambling harm minimisation strategies; and a budget that strengthens casino and gaming regulations. For me, however, the jewel in the crown was the \$363 million in response to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. This will begin to respond to all of the recommendations of the excellent work undertaken by Justice McMurdo. A very recent injection of \$2 million to DVConnect over two years is further evidence that this government and in particular this minister are absolutely committed to the provision of a Queensland where women and girls are safe at home and have access to secure jobs and every opportunity that our state can provide.

The Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services was similarly buoyant about his portfolio, and with good reason. The minister was able to outline that the police budget has exceeded \$3 billion for the first time in the state's history and will be part of the biggest boost in policing numbers in 30 years. More than 1,000 new officers have graduated from the state's two police academies since July 2020. These officers will be equipped with the newest integrated load-bearing ballistic vests. They may also be lucky enough to be issued one of the 5,000 new QLITE tablets. When called to an incident, they may be riding in one of the 250 new police vehicles, and when they step out of that vehicle, they may be activating one of the 4,500 new body worn cameras.

I also commend our Police Commissioner, Katarina Carroll, who with commendable patience and great professionalism had to point out to the LNP that, when questioning the increase in policing numbers, it is always helpful to look at the correct figures. Similarly, attempts to draw new sensationalism into the long-defunct Caloundra watch house saga fell spectacularly flat yet again. A quote from Deputy Commissioner Smith is all that is required at this point. He said—

... we were always planning, with the growth that is on the southern part of the Sunshine Coast, for an increase in those facilities. Obviously, that would have included the ability to increase the use of that particular watch house. It was not suitable ... in its form ... but the opportunity that has been presented to us means that we can increase it now.

I take the opportunity to wish Deputy Commissioner Smith the very best in his new role after his retirement.

I cannot let the opportunity pass without highlighting the eye-watering comments in the LNP's statement of reservation as they pertain to corrective services. The LNP were also concerned about the lack of available beds in jails. I have said in this House that the LNP response to overcrowding was to close a jail. That was their response to bed space, and I will happily repeat that every time they hold the door open for me to raise it again. The LNP cannot complain that double-bunking is not proceeding quickly enough when their sole contribution to overcrowding was to close a jail. The LNP comments belittling custodial staff about the issuing of show bags is a slap in the face for officers who had just risked their lives to quell a major riot. It is ridiculous to belittle their efforts in that way in the ongoing LNP onslaught against the Public Service. On that incredulous note, I commend the report to the House.