



Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.50 pm): I would like to start by thanking the members of the Community Support and Services Committee for their report and their work supporting the estimates process. I would like to particularly acknowledge the committee chair, the member for Mansfield, for the professional way she always chairs these hearings.

Estimates are an opportunity to acknowledge and speak about the work undertaken by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. My department works with some of Queensland's most vulnerable children, young people and families, and they deserve to be acknowledged for the work they do each and every day to support children, keep our community and young people safe, and promote a united, inclusive and harmonious Queensland. While asked very few questions by members of the opposition or crossbench about my portfolio, I appreciated the opportunity provided by government members to do so.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic many of the families my department works with, who were already facing a complex range of issues, are struggling more intensively with domestic and family violence, substance abuse, mental health and intergenerational trauma. While the number of families and children requiring child protection intervention is now showing signs of stabilising, sadly there was an increase in children coming into the care of the department during the pandemic. There are now over 11,000 children and young people in out-of-home care in Queensland. We are responding to that demand with an additional investment of \$2.2 billion over five years and \$500 million per annum ongoing for out-of-home-care services.

My \$2.3 billion budget this financial year represents an increase in funding across all three of my portfolio responsibilities and includes an historic commitment to extend support to young people leaving care to the age of 21. We are making a \$400,000 commitment to co-design, establish and review the extension of the availability of the foster care allowance by two years for carers of young people who remain living with them up to the age of 21. We will also be funding culturally appropriate non-government caseworker support and financial support for young people leaving non-family-based care from 18 up to 21. This reform was called for by young people and our government listened. Now

it will be designed by young people for young people and will commence from 1 July 2023. This will be life-changing for roughly 700 young people every year. There were no questions asked about this reform by those opposite.

This budget also includes increased funding of \$75.3 million towards implementing our youth justice strategy reforms, including an expansion of the number of locations from eight to 14 for the statewide multi-agency collaborative panels. We are also continuing our investment in Indigenous youth and family workers and family-led decision-making, the Mount Isa Transitional Hub and our co-responder teams across the state who work with at-risk youth to keep our communities safe. There were no questions by those opposite about these areas of investment.

Earlier this year I announced a one-off \$1.4 million Community Partnership Innovation Grant scheme in response to calls from the community to support innovative place-based initiatives to prevent and reduce youth crime. We had such a strong reaction from the community that in this budget I was pleased to announce an additional \$3 million has been allocated to the grant scheme to partner with local communities on crime prevention projects targeting repeat offenders. There were no questions asked by those opposite about this grant program either. There were questions from the government members, and I thank them for their interest.

We are also investing \$16 million in this budget to continue delivering on the whole-of-government Queensland Multicultural Action Plan to ensure equitable access to job opportunities and services for all Queenslanders, migrants and refugees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. There were no questions about this new plan from those opposite—only questions about why I had not had trade discussions with multicultural leaders. It may surprise some to learn that I am not the trade minister. We have also allocated a million dollars over four years and \$170,000 ongoing to support and engage with the Australian South Sea islander community, with a dedicated Australian South Sea islander to be employed in my department. I am pleased to say that I got one question from those opposite about this investment.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the work of my department under the leadership of my director-general, Deidre Mulkerin, and all of my deputy directors-general all across the department who work every day to serve the interests of Queensland's most vulnerable. I also acknowledge my ministerial staff. I will continue to work in the interests of children, young people and families.