



Speech By  
**Robert Skelton**

**MEMBER FOR NICKLIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 August 2022


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Community Support and Services Committee, Report**

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.21 pm): I rise to speak on the 2022-23 budget estimates report of the Community Support and Services Committee in its role of overseeing the areas of portfolio responsibility for communities, housing, digital economy, the arts, seniors, disability services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, children, youth justice and multicultural affairs.

Firstly, I would like to thank ministers Leeanne Enoch, Craig Crawford and Leanne Linard for their participation in the estimates committee process. I would also like to thank: committee chair Corrine McMillan, deputy chair Stephen Bennett and acting chair Linus Power for their leadership and direction; and fellow members Cynthia Lui, Michael Berkman and Mark Robinson for their contribution. I recognise the presence of members opposite, including the member for Surfers Paradise, at the public hearing and thank them for their interest in the matters discussed. Of course, I recognise the work of the committee secretariat, Hansard, parliamentary and departmental staff during the estimates process.

The purpose of the estimates process is to examine the intended expenditure throughout the areas of portfolio responsibility to verify the effective use of the state's resources. I note that through this process the committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2022 be agreed to by this House without amendment. I take the opportunity to once again congratulate the Treasurer on delivering such a well-balanced budget, delivering good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle. It is a budget that gets things done for the people of Queensland.

We can see how busy the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy has been. It is getting on with the job of delivering over \$2.3 billion worth of investments to increase the supply of social housing, invest in our community facilities and enrich the lives of Queenslanders by enhancing our access to arts and cultural experiences.

A measure of success is the QuickStarts Qld program, which had a target of 727 new social housing commencements before 30 June this year. The Palaszczuk Labor government had commenced 832 by that date. This investment includes \$125.6 million over four years to strengthen the role and functioning of neighbourhood and community centres—for which I know my local Nambour Community Centre is very grateful—and to support the delivery of the government's response to the committee's inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. For the benefit of all members, these centres operate all over our great state. All are similar in their goals and outcomes but have different challenges

to address. Providing the added funding but leaving it to those centres to manage is important for the context I just described. In 2022-23 the government has committed \$3.9 million to 43 social isolation services across the state to help older Queenslanders stay connected and engaged with their community. An example is the work of the Australian Red Cross.

We have seen also the hard work of the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships as it continues to work with our First Nations people and the broader community to progress the Path to Treaty. What a proud day for our state as we embark on a fully funded Path to Treaty. The date was not lost on me, as it was also the day in 1975 when a Labor leviathan, Gough Whitlam, met Vincent Lingiari at Wave Hill Station. From little things big things grow. I thank the House for hosting such a moving event yesterday. I know that many in my electorate of Nicklin were watching with pride. I look forward to the truth-telling and healing. I am also keenly aware that there will be forces arrayed that will attempt to stop us. Let us, all Queenslanders, get this done.

The 2022-23 budget also includes an additional \$385 million to provide households with the \$175 cost-of-living rebate for electricity. This will come into effect for bills after 30 August this year.

We can see the rebuild and ramping up of capacity in the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, which has seen a 23 per cent increase in funding on top of the last estimates. This allows the department to get on with the job of supporting families to safely care for their children and young people as well as caring for those in out-of-home care. Through this increase we are extending support for young people leaving care up to 21 years of age. This means that foster and kinship carers will continue to receive financial support. I thank the selfless Queenslanders who undertake foster care. It is an extraordinary and generous thing to welcome another into your family.

This report once again confirms that we are a government committed to getting things done for the people of Queensland—a government that cares about the community and looks forward to a bright future where each of us has access to good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle. I commend this report to the House.