




Speech By  
**Amanda Camm**

**MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.52 pm): Over the past week and today it has been quite incredible to hear government members announce how proud they are of tackling the cost-of-living crisis and how proud they are, as am I, of the region that I represent and the massive workforce that I represent that go into the Bowen Basin every single day and mine that coal that this state then enjoys the royalties from. Our greater Whitsunday region, by the government's own admission, received \$623.4 million from the capital program—the lowest investment in the capital program in the entire state behind outback Queensland. That is what the Palaszczuk Labor government thinks of Central Queenslanders and thinks of the communities of the Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday region and the good, hardworking coalminers who drive in and drive out every day risking their lives on the Bruce Highway and the road into the Bowen Basin on the Peak Downs Highway, which has some of the highest death rates in the state. I represent that large workforce which has produced \$15 billion in royalties, but we have seen very little returned back to the region that I represent.

When I take a closer look at the capital investment I wonder: where has the funding gone? It has not gone into new boat ramps. It certainly has not gone into improved roads. When it comes to energy infrastructure, I point to the massive announcement that we saw earlier this year—the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro project, now affectionately known as the 'hydro hoax'. Why do I think it is a hydro hoax? It might have something to do with the fact that there has been no business case and that there is no environmental impact statement. In fact, the feasibility study was not really made public—or is it the fact that not one community leader from industry right through to the mayor had ever even heard of the project?

I want to take the House on a little reminder journey. The Energy and Jobs Plan was announced just post the federal budget. It was the same day as Police Remembrance Day. The reason I know that is I was at the police remembrance service in Mackay which was held up by the late arrival of the Premier. She had not arrived on time because nobody knew the Premier was coming. The Premier was coming not to attend Police Remembrance Day; the Premier was coming, as we thought at the time, to announce and release the full inquiry report into the Mackay Base Hospital maternity and gynaecology disaster. But, no: the Premier was there with the Minister for Energy and the Minister for Water to announce the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro project. The morning of that day people received a phone call saying, 'Would you like to come along to a press conference because we're about to announce something exciting for your community?' We then saw the glossy brochures that do not depict, and are not images of, the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro location. In fact, that location is set between two subtropical rainforests.

I note that the Minister for the Environment is in the House and I congratulate her on the reshuffle in terms of her portfolio, and I suspect that she is probably the only minister who is very happy with the reshuffle. On behalf of the residents of the greater Mackay region and given the importance of this

project to the state interest, which is the cornerstone of an energy plan, and to give surety to the residents of the Pioneer Valley and Mackay, I put on the public record an invitation to the environment minister, who I know had representation when the Labor conference was up in Mackay.

That is another point: not only was there another announcement and the opening of a hydro office in Mackay the day before the Labor conference but it also coincided quite rudely with a civic reception to commemorate Australia's worst air disaster which my community and the mayor of Mackay were hosting for three international American visitors. It was a very important day, because yesterday marked 80 years since the tragic loss of lives of American servicemen in the Bakers Creek air crash. The Premier decided to drop into town that day with no notice and open an office. Instead of the mayor and other civic leaders being able to attend that opening, we were doing the right thing in attending a civic reception. That is not all: the hydro plan was so important in terms of undertaking pre-drilling studies that the department and Queensland Hydro decided to pick World Environment Day to commence the drilling. There has been an announcement, and in the budget there is over \$15 billion in royalty revenue for a cornerstone energy plan that is all about one project—the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro project—yet we have not seen the environment minister go and inspect the Eungella National Park, which has over 1,417 recorded species. We have not seen the drillers put on record a platypus management plan, which is what they should have done. There are three critically endangered species, eight endangered, six vulnerable and six near threatened. The hypocrisy of this Labor government, which holds its environmental credentials so high, when it comes to this plan—whether it is in my community or across the state—is almost farcical. It is like something out of *Utopia*.

I want to move on. There has been a decline in road funding across my region of 31 per cent in line with the capital investment. In terms of road funding, there is no funding for my local roads such as the Mackay Bucasia Road upgrade. This is an area which has the highest population in Mackay, and growing. The minister continues to ignore our pleas about congestion and the risk that that road poses because it is one way in and one way out for 23,000 residents. There has been no increase in Bruce Highway flood mitigation funding, and now we see the combination of the Goorganga Plains study and the Hamilton Plains study being part of a coordinated approach to address flood impacts on this location.

I inform the Minister for Main Roads that these two watercourses are 15 kilometres apart. One cuts off the Airlie Beach community to its hospital in Proserpine and the other one cuts off the entire community to its airport. What did we see announced in this budget? A business case which still has not been completed that was meant to be completed at the start of this year that will not be completed by January next year. This is not good enough and it is certainly not good enough when we are looking down the road at an Olympic Games, where we want to showcase the great global brand that is the Whitsundays when it comes to tourism investment.

I would also draw to the attention of the House the lack of funding for a commitment to deliver a renal dialysis unit that was announced in Proserpine by former minister Kate Jones. Three years later we still do not see the renal dialysis unit delivered. I beg the health minister to fast-track that. People in their eighties are risking their lives on the Bruce Highway several times a week to go to Mackay when they should be able to access that service in their home town. I commend the staff at the Proserpine Hospital. They do an incredible job with very little.

I acknowledge the funding that was given to my schools: Proserpine State High School and Proserpine State School. My schools are continuously growing and struggling with the population growth that we see surging in the Whitsundays. I acknowledge those commitments by Minister Grace and thank her for the investment in the upgrade of classrooms and specialist services. I also acknowledge that the council in Mackay received significant funding for the Bloomsbury water supply upgrade which is desperately needed to ensure that we have drinking water for the long-term—a basic necessity that many take for granted.

I would like to turn now to areas of my shadow portfolio. The commission of inquiry recommendation for the government to appoint an independent implementation supervisor to oversee the implementation of Hear her Voice recommendations did not come soon enough. It is critical to ensure that those measures are implemented in a timely manner and are evaluated. Statewide DVO breaches have increased by over 50 per cent. Last week I was in Townsville, where we are still waiting for the high-risk team to come to fruition that was announced a year ago. We are also awaiting the Mount Isa high-risk team, which is still out in the tender process. I urge the Attorney-General to ensure that that is finalised. Women's lives are at risk.

I believe that what happened at the forensic lab is the biggest maladministration ever overseen by any Queensland state government. The implications for victims of crime are yet to be realised. The budget line allocated in this budget is an admission by this government that they have failed victims of

crime. What this means for our justice system, what this means for victims and the trauma associated with what is to come over the next decade or more is something that should not be forgotten. It needs to be put under the spotlight each and every year that passes.

I acknowledge and recognise the government's further contribution to domestic and sexual violence services. I hope that the Attorney-General confirms funding to the Red Rose Foundation which was left in limbo after the department did not release their evaluation and confirmation of funding. The Red Rose Foundation does incredible work that is supported by both sides of this House and I want to make sure that they are not forgotten in the machinery-of-government changes.

**Ms McMillan:** They will not be.

**Ms CAMM:** I will take that interjection. I am sure there are members in this House who will be advocating for that very strongly. There is funding that addresses low female apprenticeship retention and completion rates. However, this funding has come nearly 18 months after the state government's report into the issue which recommended urgent action. The report detailed completion rates for Queensland female apprentices in male dominated industries being at least 21 per cent worse than that of their male counterparts. The private sector, particularly the mining and services industry, are doing their bit.

I acknowledge and welcome the government's announcement of free kindergarten. I hope that the commitment is not just a shiny announcement and that there has been detailed planning, that there are educators ready to go and kindergarten classrooms are ready to open by the start of school next year. Many, in particular the most vulnerable in our community, will rely upon that. The gender pay gap is still the second worst in the country, a difference of nearly \$14,000 per annum. I acknowledge the Women's Budget Statement this year. It is a lot meatier than it has been in previous years. I also acknowledge that the Minister for Women outlined superannuation differences and gaps which I believe I raised in the House last year when it was not outlined in too much detail in the budget statement.

I highlight that, when it comes to the budget, announcements are important but real action has to follow. The way that the Minister for Women denigrated another woman of this House because of her career and her service to nursing is not becoming of the Minister for Women and not becoming of any female member of this House. I will call it out every time for what it is: it is bullying and it is shameful. There are nurses all across this state who have accreditation to train and to provide administration.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Order, members. I will warn members under the standing orders from now on.

**Ms CAMM:** The fact that one member decides to give up that career and come and serve as a member to better inform public policy and to legislate and then is criticised for doing so by a senior minister of the government and the Minister for Women is disgusting.

**Ms McMillan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Mansfield is warned under the standing orders. There will be more to follow if I see them.

**Ms CAMM:** The Women's Budget Statement, as I said, outlines a lot of substance which is very important and critical to closing the gap. The new housing minister raised that the opposition does not have any ideas and that we did not actually touch on any solutions. I have some solutions for the new Minister for Housing. The Minister for Housing could, in fact, approve the Mackay community housing stock transfer.

On 31 May 2018, when I was a director of the company and a former deputy mayor, I met with the former housing minister. That is five years ago. We had been advocating for it for two years previously. It is still not signed off. If the Minister for Housing could sign that off for the Mackay community and get that done in the next six months that would be incredible. What a win. I will give her another idea: she could fund over-50s housing in the Whitsundays. The council has donated the land and the community is fundraising. We have repeatedly called for state government funding. There is another solution to help close that gap for women over 55. The Minister for Housing could also investigate the fact that our refuges, when it comes to domestic and family violence victims, are full, hotels are full, there are no rental properties, no social housing properties and women are sleeping in cars with their children. If the Minister for Housing could work with the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence that would be fantastic and a great start in closing the gap for women who are most vulnerable and at risk and whom this Labor government has failed to keep safe.