



Speech By
Jason Hunt

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2023


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill


Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, Report

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (12.58 pm): I rise today to contribute to the debate around the budget estimates of recent weeks. Scrutiny of the Appropriation Bill allows all members to unpack the bill and essentially place it under a microscope of critique and investigation. This in turn allows the people of Queensland to rest assured that the government funding is being well-spent in as many of the priority areas as we would wish. It comes as no surprise that this is certainly the case with this government. All of the key areas are funded better than ever before, while handing down the largest budget surplus the state has ever seen, while simultaneously paying down state debt—ticking every box, really.

Thanks, as always, goes to our incredibly hardworking secretariat team who ensure that a potentially complex process runs very smoothly, but they also have to cater, literally and figuratively, to the sometimes vastly wideranging needs and demands of MPs across the entire spectrum. To my fellow committee members—chair, Peter Russo, member for Toohey; the illustrious Jonty Bush, member for Cooper; Laura Gerber, member for Currumbin; Sandy Bolton, member for Noosa; and Mr Jon Krause, member for Scenic Rim—I say thank you.

The process this year was largely very civilised and effective and, by every means, extremely balanced. For example, non-government MPs got to ask almost 70 per cent of the questions and within that context, non-government MPs received precisely twice the time allocation.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

 **Mr HUNT:** I continue where I left off before lunch. For example, non-government MPs got to ask almost 70 per cent of the questions. Within that context, non-government MPs received precisely twice the time allocation, and what use they made of it, but I will come back to it.

I would also like to thank the respective ministers involved in our committee hearings and estimates process: Mark Ryan, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services; and Yvette D'Ath, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence. Very simply, the committee recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill for the committee's area of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

I am delighted to be part of a government that has, for example, set aside significant and increased funding for such things as an effective and meaningful response to the recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report *Hear her voice*. There is \$68.7 million over four years and \$6.3 million ongoing per annum including funding for such things as addressing gaps in domestic, family and sexual violence service provision to the tune of \$58.3 million over four years and \$20.7 million per annum ongoing.

Naturally, I was very pleased to explore the funding arrangements around the Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, \$341 million of a total of \$861 million to continue the expansion of the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct Stage 2. The new centre will be a modern purpose-built facility with over 1,500 beds that will focus on health and rehabilitation to reduce offending. It will be a very welcome addition to our custodial infrastructure and it will provide a measure of welcome relief to the current crowding situation.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr HUNT: For the benefit of the member for Mermaid Beach, I say that we all know what the LNP response to custodial staff safety was.

Ms Pugh: What was it?

Mr HUNT: They closed the Darling Downs correctional centre. It was interesting to hear the justification they used, which was to rein in waste, which is exactly the same rhetoric they are currently using. In LNP speak, waste means cuts, overspending means cuts and blowouts mean cuts. The former LNP minister went on to say that he regretted the job losses, which is extremely touching. I am sure it was a great comfort to the newly unemployed QCS staff.

The LNP's statement of reservation at the end of the estimates report is of course the usual tale of whining without solution, frontage without depth and gears without teeth. In lieu of substance, the LNP wrote pages of nonsense simply to admire their own handy work. I am reminded of the words of Oscar Wilde, who stated that the only excuse for making a useless thing is to admire it intently. However, the LNP did provide some comedy relief. Having feigned concerns about the safety of Queenslanders and our firefighters, what did they zero in on as a primary concern for North Queensland firefighters?

Mr Madden: What was it?

Mr HUNT: Tsunamis. In an effort to demonstrate they are ready to govern, the LNP is tackling the big issues like the risk posed to QFES buildings by tsunamis.