



Speech By  
**Hon. Leanne Enoch**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2023


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Community Support and Services Committee, Report**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (2.38 pm): I rise to speak to the Community Support and Services Committee's budget estimates report. I thank the members of the committee, the parliamentary staff and officers from my department who supported the estimates process again this year. I also acknowledge the ongoing leadership provided by the committee chair, the member for Mansfield.

My department's \$492 million annual budget includes important funding to support Queensland's Path to Treaty, a \$3 million to boost food relief services and \$51.4 million to secure Queensland's cultural calendar and futureproof the state's cultural infrastructure. As I said to the committee, our government knows that many Queenslanders are doing it tough right now facing national cost-of-living pressures, so this budget is focused squarely on tackling those pressures and supporting Queenslanders.

One of the most significant things the Palaszczuk government will do this financial year is implement the landmark treaty legislation that this parliament passed in May this year with the full support of the Liberal National Party, the Greens political party and the independent member for Noosa. The establishment of the Treaty Institute and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will be a major focus of the year ahead. As the Minister for Treaty, the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and an Aboriginal woman, I am deeply committed to the foundations of the Uluru Statement to Voice and to Queensland's Path to Treaty and truth.

During estimates the member for Surfers Paradise, the shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, the LNP spokesperson for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters in Queensland, questioned why I, an Aboriginal person and the minister responsible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, might dare meet with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who work in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships section of my department—a section of government, I should add, that exists solely for the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander interests and matters. Even when you say it out loud it sounds ridiculous, but I answered that question honestly and with as much dignity as I could muster, outlining what is foundational 101 cultural

awareness about basic cultural protocols that anyone working in or around Indigenous affairs—let alone someone who is paid over \$60,000 more than his backbench colleagues to be the LNP spokesperson in this space—would be expected to know.

It is safe to say that this question was not about the member for Surfers Paradise demonstrating his complete lack of cultural awareness or the absence of a basic understanding of his responsibilities as a shadow minister; rather, it was an exercise in pacifying the far right of his party after the fallout of the LNP's support of the treaty legislation in this parliament. According to media reports, the Leader of the Opposition, who delivered a strong speech in support of the treaty legislation, has been under immense pressure from the LNP party structure, which is apparently enraged by the legislation and calling for it to be repealed. Instead of standing by his word in this place, the Leader of the Opposition sent the member for Surfers Paradise out to attempt to win back those who would rather see Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the issues that impact them sidelined—those who would rather see the status quo remain so that the unacceptable gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders is never closed, those who believe that there is no special place in this state for the longest continuous living cultures on the planet. The member for Broadwater allowed his opposition spokesperson to use estimates to misrepresent the normal cultural practice and protocol of First Nations peoples simply for political purposes.

It is this lack of conviction and the blatant misrepresentation of Indigenous practices for political purposes that speaks to the need for a permanent voice to parliament for First Nations peoples—a voice that cannot be abandoned because a leader cannot stand by their own word or because it is not supported by a powerful, extreme fringe of a political party. The referendum that will be held later this year is truly a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reflect upon and contribute to the social and cultural identity of our nation and then ask our Constitution to reflect that back to us. It is not an opportunity for the LNP to find new and absurd ways to divide us as a state or a country.

I stand by this government's support of treaty and of truth and by this government's support of Voice. I thank the committee for its work. I commend the report to the House. I call on all members of this House to support Voice, treaty and truth.