



Speech By  
**Peter Russo**  
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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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 RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.38 pm): I rise to speak on the consideration of the Appropriation Bill through the budget committee process and support the adoption of the report of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee in relation to its areas of responsibility. Before I proceed I would like to refer to the foreword of the report. As we are all aware, Queensland's strong economic performance over the past 12 months, as supported by statements made by the Treasurer in this House, has provided the state with a strong fiscal foundation and sustainability into the future. This year the budget reflected a higher-than-expected revenue which presented an increase in funding for services and infrastructure needs. The government is using these dividends to create more good, secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries, as well as affirming a strong and diverse economy for Queensland's future.

Our committee heard from the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence about matters pertaining to her portfolio. I know the additional funding announced for domestic and family violence services, the provision of comprehensive and timely coronial investigations as well as the continuation of the Victims Liaison Service are all welcomed. It is clear that supporting people in need is a core aim of the Attorney-General, her department and portfolio entities.

As we know, the Electoral Commission of Queensland, which is another part of the committee's responsibility, will have a big year in 2024, delivering the local government elections and preparing and planning for our 2024 state general election.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tragic loss of police constables Rachel McCrow and Matthew Arnold who were murdered at Wieambilla late last year, as well as firefighter Izabella 'Izzy' Nash who tragically lost her life in the line of duty earlier this year. These were bleak times and a stark reminder of the dangers that these people encounter in their chosen professions. We thank them deeply for their services to the people of Queensland.

It was encouraging to hear that, despite these tragedies, the Minister for Police and Corrective Services advised that there has been a 120 per cent increase in recruit applications since January this year. The police recruitment pipeline is stronger than ever. The Queensland Police Service has also been proactive in its response to the many challenges that have arisen after COVID-19. These

challenges have been highlighted in the fluctuations in statistical reporting. However, the Queensland Police Service continue to respond to core issues and adopt modern policing procedures and methodology.

The Queensland Corrective Services are actively addressing the issues that are particular to their roles. The rollout of body cameras will increase the safety of officers while they do their job. Modern detection methods—including using passive alert drug detection dogs in visitor areas of correctional centres and drone intercepts—are being used to block contraband that people attempt to take into correctional centres. Body scanners will be a welcome improvement, especially in many of the correctional centres.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Services have entered into a contract for new structural firefighting helmets for firefighters. A wide range of testing has been done in operational circumstances and at their training college. A firefighter's role can often involve danger, and every assistance they receive cannot be underestimated.

Over the course of our estimates hearing, our committee welcomed members from the opposition and crossbench who were accepted to participate in our hearing. I thank these members for their participation. I would also like to thank the committee members for their hard work and valuable contribution to the estimates hearings. I also thank our committee secretariat and other Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance throughout the estimates process. I commend the report to the House.