



Speech By
Mark Robinson

MEMBER FOR OODGEROO

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (3.54 pm): I start my contribution by thanking the committee members and the secretariat for their work. The Community Support and Services Committee estimates hearing covered numerous portfolio areas of this year's budget: treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, communities and the arts; child safety, seniors, disability services and multicultural affairs; and tourism and sport. Sadly, the estimates process only reinforced my statement in my speech on the budget that the government has failed the people of the Cleveland area of Wellington Point, Ormiston, Birkdale, Cleveland, Thornlands and North Stradbroke Island. This budget does not deliver a fair share for the broader Redlands Coast area—the seats of Oodgeroo, Redlands, Capalaba and parts of Springwood. There is insufficient time to cover each area, but I will touch on a few things in each of the portfolios.

In terms of treaty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, we see that the wrong priorities of this government have meant that Indigenous Australians are suffering. The minister spent \$126,000 on a nine-day trip to the United States and Canada in October last year for little real benefit to Indigenous peoples, particularly in terms of closing the gap. Those funds could have been used towards closing the gap in practical ways on North Stradbroke Island to benefit the Quandamooka people more directly. Labor has repeatedly failed to deliver the basics for the Quandamooka people in terms of education, housing and job security. In fact, it was this government's legislation on North Stradbroke Island that sacked 30 per cent of the Sibelco workforce who were Quandamooka and other First Nations peoples. That is a disgraceful legacy of this government. Instead the focus, sadly, has largely been on virtue signalling.

In terms of communities and arts, further details about the minister's \$126,000 trip to the United States and Canada and the cost of department travel to Venice, Italy were also revealed. Again this showed a poor use of funds and the wrong priorities.

In terms of child safety, seniors and disability services, ongoing failures in child safety were revealed, particularly in terms of residential care and housing standards. The QFCC commissioner belled the cat when he stated—

We continue to place children and young people in houses we would not choose for our own children.

In terms of residential care, we saw the school attendance issue. Twenty-five per cent of children in out-of-home care experience significant forms of disruption to their schooling, and this is not helping. The numbers are growing, as the shadow minister covered in her contribution. There are 1,955 young

people in residential care—up from 1,759 last year, when the residential care review was launched. This is up 11 per cent. When we look at under-12s and under-10s, there are significant increases that are very concerning.

In terms of multicultural affairs, we see failures. One of the aspects that was revealed was the management of the Hamas issue among affected multicultural communities since the 7 October atrocity against Israeli men, women and children. On North Stradbroke Island, for some reason there is a Palestinian flag flying over TMR land on the main road at Dunwich. This is causing great consternation to locals, who are wondering why the government is doing that and focusing on just one part of that issue. It is affecting tourism on North Stradbroke Island as well. There is a lot of adverse comment to me as the local member: 'It is sad that they are being so one-sided.' I have written to the minister about this irregularity and the upset it is causing. Again I call on the minister and the government to do the right thing and remove the single flag or add other flags in order to be balanced and respectful.

In terms of tourism, we saw cost blowouts and delays in many ecotourism projects like the Wangetti Trail. We see with Great Keppel Island there was a 2017 election commitment; Labor promised to rejuvenate the island but little has occurred. We see the North Stradbroke Island futures program and the underspend of \$1.7 million as well as the Howard Smith Wharves and the new pontoons that were meant to be there but are not. There are many other ways in which this budget continues to fail the people of North Stradbroke Island and my electorate.