




Speech By
Hon. Amanda Camm

MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

Record of Proceedings, 27 August 2025

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

Education, Arts and Communities Committee

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.24 pm): In my contribution to the Education, Arts and Communities Committee report on the Appropriation Bill, I first place on record my thanks for and acknowledgement of the significant contribution that both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker made in this year's estimates in the transparent approach the Crisafulli government is taking to the estimates process. I also thank those committee members who participated on the day. I thank them for their questions particularly across my complex but important portfolio.

As I explained to the committee, the former Labor government oversaw the creation of a billion dollar residential care system. It is one of the reasons I made the decision very early in the term to make a recommendation to government to call for a commission of inquiry into the child safety system, and that commission of inquiry is broad. I note that the commissioner is well underway with that work and will be conducting forthcoming hearings for a period of almost three weeks in Cairns and Far North Queensland to give those people opportunities to present to him.

What we inherited from the previous Labor government was nothing short of a system in crisis. I note that the opposition members' statement of reservation quotes me as saying during the estimates process that the residential care road map was 'a road to nowhere'. That is correct. The residential care road map does not go anywhere. Therefore, we are not proceeding with it. We are undertaking significant reform while the commission of inquiry is underway. We are not leaving that reform for 18 months. We are taking a continuous improvement approach.

When I look at the number of children in residential care, for children under the age of 12 we have seen an increase from 146 to 686 children. The cost to the taxpayer represents an individual child and the trauma imposed upon that child from the design of this system and the reliance on this system. We are undertaking forensic audits into some of those unlicensed for-profit providers to get to the bottom of their costs and pricing.

I also outlined to the committee the important work that has been undertaken into the review of DVConnect. I was very pleased to report to the committee the work my department had undertaken in the service performance of the crisis 24/7 response that DVConnect operates on behalf of the state government. We will continue to work very closely with that organisation. Performance is the key to ensuring taxpayers' money is respected and that the return on investment is in supporting victims and also persons using violence who seek help to get that help when they need it.

We also touched on a number of election commitments. Across the portfolio I am very pleased that we are continuing with the government's program around neighbourhood centres and renewal as well as many other government election commitments such as the Men's Shed election commitments.

I was pleased to hear from multiple members that there are currently negotiations of contracts underway with my department.

We are also delivering a domestic and family violence strategy that will focus on the next decade, with an investment plan associated with that that aligns closely with our commitment under the national partnership agreement. I am very pleased to say that I have just signed off on that work plan with the federal government. We will be engaging broadly with stakeholders as part of our domestic and family violence reforms.

As part of our funding around domestic and family violence—and I will have more to say about this in the coming weeks—it is certainly my intention to support particularly First Nations women in their voice and advocacy because of the over-representation that they experience from domestic and family violence. I had a very productive meeting recently in Cairns and Far North Queensland.

I also want to place on record my thanks not just to members of parliament who were there on the day but also to my officials and the director-general. I do not think it is appropriate that non-government members politicise public servants at the level they do, but I thank them for their professionalism.

(Time expired)