



Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

##### **Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill**

##### **Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (4.04 pm): I rise to speak to report No.2 of the 57th Parliament's Education, Employment and Training Committee to do with the estimates process. From the outset, I would like to jump onto some of the comments made by the opposition when it comes to the estimates process itself. As one of my constituents who had the interest to watch the estimates process said to me recently, 'What is the point of government members asking government ministers questions?' I said, 'They are asking them Dorothy Dixers.' He said, 'Isn't the role of the opposition then to hold the government to account? What is the point of the government members trying to hold their own government to account when all they are asking is advertising publication questions?' He has a great point. The last government member to hold the government to account was the former member for Bundamba, Jo-Ann Miller. She was a great voice and great fighter for her people in the Ipswich area.

Moving on to some of the topics that have been discussed here today, we were talking about new schools. The government was talking about how wonderful it is that all these new schools are being built on the northern Gold Coast and throughout Queensland. We certainly support the idea of that, but we also need to understand catchment areas. One of my local schools has been progressively and dramatically shrinking in population over the past few years. That is because there are additional schools being built around it in the Coomera electorate. Coomera State School is losing staff and losing deputy principals. Some of these staff have been at the school for many years and they have become very proficient in that local community and much loved, but because the school's population continues to drop they are losing resources. It is down to about 500 students.

At a P&C meeting, one of the community members asked a question about the classrooms which are now sitting idle. About eight classrooms at one of my local schools are sitting idle because we are building all these new schools to the north and this is taking population away from this little school. Coomera State School is almost 150 years old. It has a long history in our local area and is second only to Pimpama State School as the oldest school in the region.

We need to be very focused on how we build new schools and what potential impact they will have on existing schools. The existing schools have the resources and facilities to cater for students. As I say to my local residents, you need to be very careful as sometimes new schools have teething problems, whereas a lot of the schools that have been around for a long time have ironed out those problems over the years.

Another topic mentioned at one of the P&C meetings was air conditioning. The vast majority of schools in my Theodore electorate have managed to air-condition almost every classroom. They were on track with fundraising. A lot of them keep saying to me, 'It is lovely that the government is giving us some money, but we should get some recognition as P&Cs for all the hard work we have done over the years.' Everybody seems to jump on board, saying, 'The government is doing this and the government is doing that,' but fundamentally these schools have already done the hard work. These parents and families have done the hard work. They feel it could have been done far sooner than it was. These issues certainly are a bit of a bugbear for my community.

I mention independent public schools. It is a philosophy and a program that has worked quite well in my area. There is a fear that independent public schools program will be terminated in the future. There needs to be some type of promise or guarantee from the government that independent public schools will be around for a lot longer. They are a great way of engaging with the community, to get community members on side to work with the school. It helps with fundraising and it helps with building bridges with different cultural groups. It is a fantastic initiative. I say to the minister that the issues of school catchment areas and independent public schools need to be addressed.