



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard 17 September 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.57 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this debate to speak to one element of the Budget that is a great love of mine and, indeed, the source of great interest and passion for many of my constituents, that is, music and, in particular, contemporary music. There is certainly debate about what is meant by contemporary music. Some people regard it as just pop music or rock and roll. However, I believe that a wider definition is music that is simply being played, created and primarily transacted commercially today.

In terms of the Budget papers, I refer specifically to the initiatives under the heading Community Culture in the Budget. The Treasurer outlined the \$3.5m that is to be allocated over four years, particularly for youth initiatives. The Treasurer outlined the idea of a venue concept to provide young bands with substantial rehearsal space and facilities within which to create video clips, a music mentor program to improve access to contemporary music tuition——

Mr Hamill: You know the former Premier criticised that program in his speech.

Mr FENLON: I am sure that the former Premier would not appreciate this program. He is probably one of those people whom the great bard Shakespeare would have been considering when he said—and I paraphrase: the man who hath no music in himself, let no such man be trusted.

Mr Hamill: And we don't trust the Leader of the Opposition, do we?

Mr FENLON: Indeed, if the man does not have music, he should not be trusted.

I continue with those initiatives. They also include a youth entertainment initiative, which will offer affordable live entertainment, particularly in provincial cities and rural areas, and further radio traineeships to enhance skills and opportunities for young people in the media and broadcasting industry. I welcome those initiatives in the music industry. However, I wish to address those very welcome initiatives not only in the cultural and artistic context but also within the overall context of this Budget, in particular with regard to its emphasis upon job creation. I hope to place firmly in the consciousness of all Government Ministers the significance of the music industry. That is what it is: a very substantial industry. As an important generator of economic prosperity and employment, especially for the young, it is a very significant industry.

For too long, Governments have ignored those economic realities and treated the music industry as it treats areas of the arts industry that require subsidies, such as the opera and the ballet. They are viewed as arts that must be provided as a public service. The full economic import and job-creation import of the music industry has been ignored. It has been seen as a soft area. In an industrial sense, how the music industry works is viewed by some as a mystery. That is not surprising, because it is a very complex industry. It is time to turn that apprehension on its head. It is time for all arms of Government to treat the music industry seriously and to treat it as an industry like all others.

The music industry is substantial. The ABS business of music estimate confirms that the music industry in Australia is at the level of \$1.2 billion per year. Australia has a 2% share of the international marketplace. The \$1.2 billion is not to be scoffed at. One realises that that is a very substantial figure when one considers that the mining industry is at the level of \$19 billion. We see entire departments set up to deal with the mining industry. We see whole arms of Government directed at securing infrastructure for the mining industry. We see the Office of the Co-ordinator General in this State having

an auspicious history in terms of developing and securing the mining industry; however, nothing comparable is provided for the music industry. The cultural/recreational services industry is \$11 billion. The accommodation, cafes and restaurants industry is \$10 billion. Again we have Government departments that are entirely devoted towards promotion and industry development of those sectors. Where is the music industry represented within Government? It is time that such a place in Government was created to drive job creation, especially for young people.

The music industry is a very significant industry by any measure; however, Queensland's share is extremely low. Therefore, our potential to create jobs is substantial. If we expand our share of the Australian market and the international marketplace there is an enormous potential for job creation and economic wealth generation. A calculation that has been provided to me indicates that \$87.5m has been lost to the southern States because of the loss of just five acts that have gone south. That list includes Savage Garden, which, I am proud to say, came from Queensland. That is an enormous tragedy in terms of job creation prospects and economic wealth for this State. We have ignored the prospects that are right before us—those fine young people whose skills are a result of the enormous surge of musical creativity and disciplined training in our primary and secondary school system. That is something of which we should be very proud. However, at the end of the day, the outcomes of that training are being vaporised. They are going to other States and overseas. There is one simple reason for that: Queensland has not developed the proper infrastructure that is necessary to support our Queensland domestic music industry. In particular, the intellectual property that is a crucial factor has been allowed to pass out of the State. Along with it have gone much of the associated economic activity and many of the jobs. The intellectual property is a very crucial factor and must be retained in this State.

What are those infrastructure elements? They include record companies, music publishing companies, recording studios, radio stations, management divisions, training divisions, live sound stage divisions, and artists and repertoire departments to source industry-viable Queensland recording artists. Those are elements of the industry that need to be created in Queensland and supported. How that is done needs to be the subject of much further policy development in this State to complement the very worthwhile initiatives in the Budget.

Unless those very worthwhile initiatives are complemented by policy—which I hope is being developed within the Government—I fear that those very worthwhile moneys could be wasted. We might as well take the young artists in question to the New South Wales and Victorian recording studios with a case full of money and hand it over to those States. That is all we are doing in terms of giving our young artists grants along the lines of the traditional arts model and sending them off to their counterparts in the other States. Unless we link that policy very substantially with a policy to develop infrastructure, we run the very real risk of wasting that money. It needs to be spent in conjunction with a very strategic approach to industry development.

I am very grateful for the briefings that have already been provided to me and the very positive reaction that I have received from the Minister for The Arts and also the office of the Minister for State Development and their departmental representatives. I know that those intentions certainly are at the heart of those Ministries, but I believe we have a way to go in terms of coordinating that approach to ensure that those moneys are properly spent on building infrastructure.

One way of providing that infrastructure is via some form of Government owned enterprise that may be set up to be an industry incubator to nurture those young musicians to further development. I hope that the Music Mentor Program is also developed to provide good training opportunities that do not exist in isolation. Those opportunities should not be allowed to vaporise with the young performers and be wasted. I hope that the Music Mentor Program provides some training opportunities that are articulated with the other opportunities for training through other training institutions and opportunities both in Queensland and other parts of Australia.

I hope that consideration is given to the Music Mentor Program so that musicians can be provided with assistance and not left isolated and so that there is a progression from practising the guitar in the garage through to managing a business both at a national and indeed an international level. A good artist, with potential, can go that far. We need to provide the articulated progression that will allow these young artists to move from the very basics of their performance right through to selling their products at a national and international level. I believe that we have a long way to go and I hope that these moneys will be spent very wisely in coordinating the various elements of this industry. We need to build this industry from scratch. We are losing these young artists to other States. Although we have some very worthwhile people in the Queensland music industry, the industry is not well coordinated. We need to put together those disparate parts, with Government assistance, to drive the appropriate infrastructure base that will take these young artists forward. Many young artists are coming through our school system. The contemporary music school at the South Bank Institute of TAFE has been operating for some years. I believe that those young people have been frustrated in terms of developing their careers in Queensland.

I also believe that the music industry is at the threshold of a great era of expansion. Technologically, we are on the verge of a new era both in terms of the digital development of musical production and Internet access. If we address this market properly, we can take advantage of being able to sell Queensland's product directly into households via the Internet. That can be done by downloading musical products to a facility that some households are now developing to cut, to burn, their own CDs. So we can sell the musical product directly from the Internet down to a CD, and even provide a CD cover and associated promotional paraphernalia, to households. We are on the threshold of this revolution in the music industry both nationally and internationally. The music industry is a great industry and we need to take full advantage of it so that our young people can create jobs.

I will finish with a very inspired statement on behalf of all musicians in my electorate and throughout Queensland by Arthur O'Shaughnessy, who lived from 1844 to 1881. In his ode he said—

"We are the music makers. We are the dreamers of dreams."
