



Speech by

**GEOFF WILSON**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Hansard 28 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL  
Estimates Committee F  
Report**

**Mr WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (2.37 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to speak in support of the majority report of Estimates Committee F, dealing with Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Education. These are two key portfolio areas within the second Beattie Budget. That Budget is one of the most sober and responsible Budgets that has been seen by this State. It identifies some key areas of service and activity that are traditional to a Labor Party Government here in Queensland. Those key areas are jobs, education, community safety, health, regional development and others. The list goes on. They are key foundation stones for any Labor Government Budget here in Queensland.

In relation to the first half of the report, dealing with Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, I commend this Minister, Mr Braddy, for the high priority that he has given—supported by the Premier—to the defence of the TAFE system here in Queensland, which had started to become run down by the ideological preoccupation of the coalition to outsourcing everything that it possibly could and running it down and turning it over to the private sector. I am pleased that we have set in place a package to restore the place of the TAFE system within the vocational education sector here in Queensland. There is a commendable increase of about \$13.1m for all the TAFE institutes to provide extra places for 7,800 students.

This is particularly important in my electorate, which is served by the Brisbane Institute of TAFE with two campuses—one at Oxford Park and another at Grovely, both of which are in the electorate of Everton but which draw their student population from the north-west suburbs, including the electorate of Ferny Grove. The second important TAFE institution out my way will be the Northpoint TAFE, which will have an annexe constructed at the Ferny Grove Tramway Museum. Electrical and mechanical trade subjects will be taught at this annexe. This institution will be involved with the Brisbane light rail project. These are two good examples of the importance of rebuilding the institution of TAFE in the community.

The second item in the employment portfolio which I want to endorse is the supported funding which has been provided for the Industry Training Advisory Bodies—the ITABs. I speak of this with a great sense of affection and some knowledge because of the eight years that I spent on the executive of Construction Training Queensland. This organisation performs a marvellous job in a tripartite, non-partisan way in bringing all the industry players together—the unions, the Government and the employers—to develop proactive and innovative training programs. A second organisation which does the same thing extremely well is BIGA Training—the Building Industry Group Apprenticeship Training scheme—which has now established offices on the north side at Brendale.

Apprenticeships have been repositioned within Government policy and programs to become a key part of getting young people into jobs. It is all very well for us to talk about jobs, jobs, jobs as we must, must, must; what we must also do is build up the status, the importance and the value that we give to apprenticeships. We must not be overwhelmed by the preoccupation of recent years of everyone wanting to go to university. Our job is to ensure that education is available for all Queenslanders, but it is important to restore the balance between trade training and higher education. I am sure we will continue along the path of providing that balance.

There is one other aspect of the employment area to which I wish to refer. I strongly support the school-based apprenticeship approach that this Government has adopted. I have seen the fruitful results of that scheme in my area.

Time expired.

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