



Speech by

**JOHN MICKEL**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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**APPROPRIATION BILL  
Estimates Committee A  
Report No. 2**

**Mr MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (2.45 p.m.): I agree totally with what the previous speaker said about the importance of education and the contribution that it makes to the Queensland economy. However, why then did the Liberal Party enter into the preference deal with One Nation, which certainly helped undermine the image that overseas students had of Queensland? The other thing the Opposition Education spokesman did not talk about was the proposal by David Kemp in terms of university fees, nor did he talk about the impact of the GST on education. We have also had the confusion between cash accounting and accrual accounting, which is why the Opposition has come up with the sums that it has. I have no doubt we will hear—because we heard it during the Budget debate—Opposition members, who claim that we have a deficit, enjoin the Government to spend more money.

However, today I want to focus on the good relationship and the work being undertaken by the Department of State Development, particularly in the trade area. Last year, I mentioned the fact that we had the office in Indonesia. With the change of Government in Indonesia, we are now in there and we should work hard with that new Government to capitalise on our relationship with Indonesia and try to get in, as I said last year, on the ground floor with Indonesia. During the Estimates committee hearing, the Minister pointed out that there is a close relationship between the Department of State Development and Austrade. I think that, if we are going to have a successful Queensland export capability, that is absolutely vital. In that context, I want to refer to the way in which the Department of State Development and Austrade can help Queensland firms. A few months ago, I represented the Premier at the Ag Show at the Toowoomba showgrounds—a very, very good show—where on display were some of Queensland's fine agricultural manufacturing firms. In particular, I want to praise the work being done by Simplicity manufacturing of Dalby. They employ 60 full-time staff and, I am told, have a turnover of \$10m. However, I think we could benefit from having some of the renowned people that we have in the Department of State Development going out and speaking at those sorts of ag shows to help rural and regional Queensland in particular understand where the export potential may exist. That is where the Austrade/Department of State Development linkage comes in for those firms. They not only hear those first-rate speakers but also gain a bit of assistance subsequently in developing their export capability. In many of these regional towns we have an outstanding manufacturing agricultural capability, and that should be recognised.

The other aspect that I want to mention in terms of why the Department of State Development is so important is that the markets can change, and change fairly rapidly. It was only 12 months ago that we were talking about the perilous situation for pork producers in this State. Yet when we look at the June edition of Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics we find that there has been a 21% increase in exports in the pork industry, particularly into Singapore. That is why State Development has to always be at the forefront, looking for opportunities to help Queensland primary producers, and rural and regional towns. I know that the Minister works particularly hard in that area.

The other aspect that I touched on in my contribution to the Budget debate, which I notice in the Budget papers, is the effect that the GST is going to have on the Queensland economy. Certainly, I believe that post-July next year the small business sector in Queensland—and Queensland is the small

business State—is going to be impacted by the GST and the paper work that goes with it. As small businesspeople go to their accounting firms, they know what an horrendous imposition this will be. Already there is talk of interest rates going up next week. I believe that pre-GST activity has already been occurring in the economy. Queensland could be in for a very dire economic situation from July onwards when all that pre-GST activity comes off stream. We have to be very careful of that. I notice that the Minister for Public Works and Housing is in the Chamber. He will be looking for a great capital works injection next year to make sure that there is a counter-cyclical process going on to combat the Federal Government's policy.

Time expired.

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