



Speech by  
**Mr DENVER  
BEANLAND**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPIILLY**

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Hansard 23 August 2000

**APPROPRIATION [PARLIAMENT] BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly—LP) (5.10 p.m.): Let me congratulate the parliamentary staff on the work that they do in the precincts of this Parliament, in particular, the Library staff, the Hansard staff, the Table Office staff, the catering staff and the attendants, to name just a few of the staff areas that do a tremendous job. I mention those because I suppose they are the ones who we deal with most on a day-to-day basis in a whole range of our parliamentary duties. Having said that, let me say that they do a great job under stress. There always seems to be increasing stress due to cutbacks in the funding for Parliament House and the funding for these particular areas. It is unfortunate that we continually see these cutbacks occurring.

About 12 months ago, we were to get laptop computers. I congratulated the Speaker on this forward move. People in the broader community believe that we have modern IT facilities. When I tell them that I and other members actually had one on trial but it was taken back from us by the Speaker because of a shortfall in funding, they find it rather astounding that this program did not continue. I raise that matter because one only has to consider the tremendous service that the Hansard staff is able to deliver using modern technology. I congratulate them on how quickly they are able to get the information out. Within a couple of hours, it is online and available to members, whereas previously it used to take 24 hours or more. With modern technology, they have been able to transform the whole process by which they operate. It is unfortunate that we are not able to match that technology when it comes to members; in fact, nothing like it.

Recently I was given a new TV monitor in my room. The monitor was fine, until I came to use it; then it became a nightmare. It was clear that it was not suitable for the needs of a member of Parliament. Eventually, the staff came and put back my old radio system so that I could at least get it to operate without spending a considerable amount of time trying to get the TV monitor to work in moving from channel to channel. As members of Parliament, we want to flick from channel to channel, whether it is radio stations or television channels, to see a range of things very quickly. Time is of the essence as a member of Parliament. Without staff, we have to do a range of matters very quickly. If you are going to operate quickly, you also need technology that operates quickly. It is unfortunate that the monitor screen installed in my room, which acted as a television set and as a radio system, was not of such a variety that it could be used quickly. In fact, it took some time. You had to refer to the panel and the keyboard. After some time fiddling around with the keyboard, pressing all the buttons—and it was not just pressing one or two buttons—you finally got the television to come on or the vision from the Chamber, and you had to keep going back to the menu. Quite frankly, it all took a considerable period of time, and even when I was in a great rush, it still took some time. There were no shortcuts.

The other matter I want to raise is school tours. I understand that the length of school tours will be cut back, if it has not already been reduced. I think that is a terribly wrong step and a grave error on the part of whoever is making that decision. I presume Mr Speaker is making the decision. I understand that school tours are currently about an hour and three quarters in length. If they are cut back to an hour and a quarter, it will simply be another one of these cut-price tour jobs. Next we will see Virgin Blue come in and do a cut-price tour for us instead of having proper tours!

One of the important considerations when it comes to schoolchildren is to ensure that they are given proper tours so that they can absorb what occurs here. It is not just a case of rushing in and

rushing through. Children need to be able to have a proper visit so that they can absorb and understand what they are seeing. It is not just a case of coming in, seeing a few members on the floor of the Chamber saying a couple of words and then disappearing again. It is important to ensure that schoolchildren have sufficient time to undertake tours in an appropriate way and receive suitable benefits from them. Many of these children travel a great distance, even those who are nearby. It disrupts their school day. They lose half a day to come here, wherever they are coming from.

Time expired.

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