



Speech by

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APPROPRIATION BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.13 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in this Estimates debate in the Committee stage in relation to the Estimates for Health and Education. First of all, I wish to affirm the gratitude expressed by the member for Archerfield to all those involved in that process. The conduct of all departmental officers involved in that process was certainly up to its usual, high standard.

I comment on the Estimates process in general. There has been some comment through this debate to date on the value of that process. I have been very interested to see the unfolding of that process in this Parliament because it was not in place during my earlier experience in this place from 1989 to 1995. So it is with great interest that I observe the value of that particular process. I think it is certainly one that is well worth while for this Parliament as an exercise in accountability.

The Estimates process is an exercise in accountability in the first place because of the extensive preparation put in by officers of the departments to at least be prepared to answer questions. Whether they are asked the questions or not is another matter, but there is certainly an enormous effort put in to preparing for the Estimates committees and to be held accountable by members from both sides of the Assembly. So it is a worthwhile process. Even if nothing terribly exciting comes out of a particular hearing, it is worth while in terms of principle by providing the opportunity for all members of this Parliament to call Ministers and officers of their department to account on their Estimates and indeed that process comes to finalisation through this debate. I cannot help thinking that it is a bit like the Big Day Out for those public servants and other officers when we see them arrive, but I certainly hope that they have a far more interesting life than coming down here for the day.

I now address very briefly the Estimates for Education. I am very pleased at the way the reception of this Budget is manifesting itself on the ground in my electorate in terms of the enthusiasm that it is now engendering and the way that it is being perceived. I cite the specific examples of the way in which the Secondary Schools Renewal Program and the moving of AccessEd to my area is impacting on the local school community. That is instilling great excitement. I know that because last week I attended a planning session for the future of the Coorparoo State School, where I happen to be the Vice President of the P & C. That was an exciting morning during which we had presentations by the very capable principals of the Coorparoo Secondary College and the Cavendish Road High School where we really looked to the future at the impact of those schools and to bring parents of that primary school to a much clearer understanding of what those secondary schools were doing and of the exciting futures that they had. After that planning session a number of parents expressed a willingness to be far more involved in planning that creates greater partnerships and integration in terms of relationships between our local primary schools and those secondary schools where such exciting developments are occurring.

It is in this broader context that we see this Budget as being very future oriented. It is one driven under the auspices of the 2010 plan to project all of our schools into the future, and that is a backdrop to these specific things occurring on the ground. It is certainly a cause of great excitement.

In terms of the Health Estimates, very briefly this reminds me of the film the Matrix because of the great matrix of forces pulling at the health system in different directions in terms of the increasing technology as opposed to the increasing levels of dependency of patients and at the same time the

increasing expectations of the community pulling in the other direction. They are incredible forces that are driving this particular set of Estimates.

Time expired.
