



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 20 August 2003

**APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (3.57 p.m.): I was very proud to have the opportunity to chair Estimates Committee C. This committee examined expenditure in the portfolios which are the foundations of our Smart State and the keystone of the Beattie government's training and education reform agenda, those being Employment, Training, Youth, the Arts and Education. Estimates Committee C also scrutinised the area of industrial relations and workplace health and safety—another vital element in the development of the Smart State and ensuring safe working conditions for all Queenslanders.

My gratitude goes to the member for Cunningham, who was the deputy chairman, and the members for Greenslopes, Ipswich, Whitsundays, Gympie and Nicklin. I will mention that the member for Nicklin did ensure the headline of the evening when he questioned the numbers of departmental staff in attendance on the day, which was well answered. It is a very good question because while you are scrutinising the budget, the members should have the power to get the correct answers from either the minister or the departmental staff. While it was questioned, I do feel that a minister or the department would be lacking if they then said, 'We do not know the answer to that question. We will have to get back to you.' While that did happen on the very rare occasion, I do believe it is very important to have the relevant departmental staff there.

I also mention that the other members who attended as guests or ring-ins included the members for Callide, Mirani and Caloundra.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr CUMMINS:** I use the word 'ring-in' only in jest. I was very pleased that they attended. I must commend everyone on a very productive day.

The member for Caloundra, as shadow minister, did have concerns about the amount of time spent on the Arts portfolio. All I can say is that it was voted on by the committee. After a decade of being in parliament, it was probably a little late for the member to raise the issue at her last estimates committee. In future, if members of the committee think that more time should be spent on the Arts, they should have their concerns addressed earlier in the process.

I particularly thank Sarah Lim, the research director; Tania Jackman, the executive assistant; and the other parliamentary staff for their assistance and expert handling of the whole process. I believe it ran very smoothly. I express my sincere thanks for their expertise and dedication to the task. My thanks also go to the three ministers and their staff for their cooperation and assistance during the estimates process.

I will touch quickly on the various things that I found important. Within my electorate on the Sunshine Coast, I have well over a dozen schools—primary and secondary, public and private. Joining that will be a new college, Chancellor College, which will be one of the first middle schools on the Sunshine Coast.

Under another minister's portfolio we have seen the opening of the new Mountain Creek TAFE, at a cost of approximately \$15 million. That facility will be of great benefit for training. That is part of our strong platform for creating more and more jobs—training people so that they can get into the private work force and be earning money for people from day one. There is also a new WorkCover office on

Nicklin Way on the Sunshine Coast. I am very grateful for that. That will ensure that workers on the Sunshine Coast have safe working areas.

During the process a lot was said about the evaluation of the preparing for school trials, the number of vocational, education and training courses being offered in schools and school based apprenticeships and traineeships. The Sunshine Coast leads the state and Queensland leads Australia in that area. I am very pleased about that. I have mentioned the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE at Mountain Creek, Mooloolaba.

I make no apologies for rattling the can on behalf of Queensland electricians, as the Electrical Safety Act protects the safety of Queenslanders, or for questioning the Ombudsman's workplace electrocution project and the recommendations that arose out of that. The building and construction industry on the Sunshine Coast is booming and workplace health and safety is a very important part of that industry. I thank all members for their assistance. I commend the process and thank all those involved.