



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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HIGHER EDUCATION [GENERAL PROVISIONS] BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (6.23 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Higher Education (General Provisions) Bill, I want to touch on the overseas higher education institutes in Queensland. Although the current act provides for an approval process for foreign universities wishing to operate in Queensland, it provides limited scope for quality assurance and sets no time limit on their approval to operate. This bill introduces a requirement that overseas higher education institutions be approved by the minister in accordance with national protocols in order to operate in the state. Approvals will be subject to cancellation where the institute's delivery of courses in Queensland does not meet the uniform national standards. A new application and renewal procedure will be established with a maximum approval period of five years. Transitional arrangements will enable current approval holders to transfer to the new system within 12 months of the commencement of the new act.

Within my electorate of Kawana there are numerous schools including the Bokarina Primary School; Buddina State School; Buderim Mountain State School; Chancellor State School; Immanuel Lutheran College, both primary and high; Kawana Waters State High School; Matthew Flinders Anglican College, both primary and high; Mountain Creek high and primary schools; Siena primary and high schools; and Harmony Montessori. Along with those great schools that lead into higher education there is the Mountain Creek TAFE, which was recently opened—or the Mooloolah TAFE, whatever it needs to be called—and the Sunshine Coast University. The reason I mention that is that I am very proud of this Sunshine Coast knowledge or educational node.

Earlier in the debate a Sunshine Coast member spoke about how the Sunshine Coast University works in with the University of Central Queensland in university training for nursing, which I do applaud. But unfortunately they did not show the courage to take it up to the federal government in saying that it is no good training dozens of nurses nowadays; we need to train hundreds of nurses. While they do have a great cooperative bond in working together, I believe that the federal government should be doing more to ensure that not dozens are trained annually but literally hundreds, if not thousands. I seek leave to table a document which is the Kawana Waters State High School brochure from the 2003 showcase awards which I attended last night along with the gala dinner showcase brochure that came with it.

Leave granted.

Mr CUMMINS: The reason I do that is that I was very happy to join with the Kawana Waters State High School, and it, too, acknowledges the benefits that it has taken from overseas students. Not only does it do great things for the students who come in and learn at our facilities but also for the general community to assimilate and learn from these students, whether they come from Asia—it is normally China in this case—or South America and other areas. I commend Jo House, who is a brilliant principal, along with all the other principals within my electorate, including Greg Peach, who also has some overseas students at Mountain Creek.

I also want to briefly sing the praises of the Australian Federation of University Women, which has a Sunshine Coast branch. I have attended bursary presentation breakfasts and recently Hurriyet Babacan, who used to head the multicultural department at the Sunshine Coast University, was the guest speaker. The Australian Federation of University Women has provided 23 bursaries to students at

the University of the Sunshine Coast since 1996 valued at approximately \$500 each. Initially, it raised the funds by selling books at breakfasts to other members, but since the first graduation ceremony at the University of the Sunshine Coast it has now raised the money for the bursaries by gowning the graduates, which is a great initiative. This past year it was able to raise close to \$5,000 in bursaries, which is a great sum of money. This year it was distributed to six young women who are very focused high achievers including Natasha Bell, Leah Csatos, Samantha Frew, Rachel James, Colleen Kneale and Jo-Anne Whatley. Those girls will go on to do great things.

I also take this opportunity to thank the minister for recently coming to the Sunshine Coast to turn the sod of the new Chancellor College. While I cannot remember the date, I can remember that it was after the first State of Origin. It was a marvellous morning where the minister turned the sod with me on this new \$20 million facility that will have a great link to the Sunshine Coast University. It will be the middle schooling ideology that will operate, and everyone on the Sunshine Coast is extremely excited about that. In closing I must mention the Mooloolaba State Primary School, which also was in last night's awards. I also praise it because it has reduced its water consumption by more than 80 per cent. This should be commended and all schools should look at it. It reduced its water charges from \$14,400 to \$2,400 each year. That is a marvellous achievement. It worked with the local Maroochy council.

In closing, I also want to mention the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints which regularly has teacher recognition awards. It is a marvellous evening that Genevieve Baker has asked me to come along to and not only be the special guest but also the speaker. So that is one not to be missed if any members are on the Sunshine Coast that evening. In closing, education should not only be for the rich. It has been mentioned earlier that it should be for everyone, and I fully agree. We are reaping the benefits of the Whitlam eras along with the Hawke and Keating eras where people from the working class could gain an education, because being rich or poor does not indicate whether or not a person is intelligent. Rather, it is the education and the opportunities to gain a good education which allows people to work their way out of lower classes and achieve prosperity for their family.

While I am a third generation railway worker and very proud of it, my older brother went on to become an engineer and has made quite a successful career. He will take up a post next year in Paris. His grandfather was semi-skilled as a crane driver in the North Ipswich workshops. So without education, families like ours would not be able to better themselves for future generations. I commend the minister and the Beattie government for putting everything we can into government. I commend the bill to the House.