



Speech by

DESLEY SCOTT

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

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HIGHER EDUCATION [GENERAL PROVISIONS] BILL

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (6.06 p.m.): Firstly, I must admit that my higher education has been through the school of life. While my friends left Toowoomba at the end of their senior year to attend the University of Queensland, I had already had two years experience in a dental surgery—a position I thoroughly enjoyed and spent 10 years in; seven years in Toowoomba and three in Melbourne. Marriage, children, work in an electorate office and many other experiences mould your thinking. However, with my husband lecturing in a private university for 12 years, it gave me a certain experience of university life and the importance of quality higher education.

We all know of people who have travelled overseas and have come back in a short couple of years with what is termed a mickey mouse degree—not highly recognised. With education being such a large component in our economy, attracting high numbers of overseas students, it is absolutely imperative that we ensure a degree at an Australian tertiary level institution makes a statement—that is, that it is of the highest quality.

I am pleased to see that states will have uniformity of quality assurance. However, the disgraceful inadequacy of Commonwealth funding to Queensland universities will see many of our bright young students missing out on the pursuit of their dreams. Tertiary institutions are very diverse these days. I am particularly pleased to have established a good relationship with Griffith University at its Logan campus. I well remember Dr Glyn Davis, our first vice-chancellor, addressing a business luncheon at the university where he expressed his absolute delight at seeing many Logan students entering the university as the first ever from their family. They have tailored their courses skilfully to meet the needs of the local area. My schools greatly appreciate teacher trainees from the Logan area coming to their schools for practical teaching. They are then the preferred graduates to come and work in our schools. Principals often praise the work they are doing and the special understanding they bring to the young students who may be facing difficulties.

During Seniors Week my university invited seniors from local retirement villages and those living nearby to come for a morning tea and meet a preschooler bused in from our preschools. I watched while seniors were paired off with wide-eyed three- and four-year-olds who went off on a wonderful discovery tour to make kites, face paint, listen to stories, paint a picture and so on. It was a great demonstration of how our university has become part of our community. Phil Rowan from their public relations community liaison department is a regular face at community events and contributes to the good relationship the university has with its community.

More and more universities are establishing additional campuses, sometimes interstate and overseas, and this bill will ensure that high standards are maintained. I must say that I am looking forward to the establishment of a medical school at Griffith on the Gold Coast and nursing degrees being offered at the Logan campus with Logan Hospital becoming a teaching hospital. The additional opportunities being offered to my constituents are invaluable. Many mature-age students are taking the opportunity to finish off their Senior Certificate at places like Kingston College Community Access School and then entering university at Logan. I believe this is giving my constituents wonderful opportunities.

I thank our minister for her commitment to higher education and I hope to see a federal government installed which will give Queensland a fair go and increase our tertiary numbers to reflect our increasing population. I am happy to support this bill.