



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.07 p.m.): I rise to support the report of Estimates Committee C. I commend the three ministers involved and all of their staff for their work on the matters that were considered through the course of the estimates hearing.

I will make a brief comment on the estimates process overall. It is a relatively new phenomenon in terms of accountability in this state. I think it is working quite well. Whilst there is not a drama every five minutes of the process, it is there as part of the overall framework of accountability in this state through the overall committee system, which includes the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Works Committee and so on. So it is included in that general array of accountability processes and is there as a safety net. It is there for this parliament and its members to examine carefully and closely, with full public scrutiny, the estimates that are contained within each year's budget.

There was some concern expressed by one of my committee colleagues about the number of public servants attending the hearing. I do not have a problem with that at all. I think it is very important for public servants to see the outcome or final result of what they are involved in over a year. Indeed, they have put a lot of hard work into it. It is easy for public servants, and certainly for people in any area of management, to be alienated from the end product of their processes. It is very important for people to see the connection between their daily work and the people who must ultimately account for that work, for the moneys being spent, to the public and the primacy of this parliament and the ministers in that process. It is a very healthy process. I fully commend all of its operations that I have seen in recent years.

There were three ministers involved in Estimates Committee C. First of all, there was the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth. I asked a question relating to the music industry—an industry which is very dear to my heart. I am very interested to see how this budget evolves, especially in relation to that particular area of the arts and youth. I have made my views very clear in the past on the music industry and the way it should evolve. I would like to see an even greater emphasis in future in the way this budget is administered on treating the music industry as an industry. It is indeed a major industry. It has many complex sectors—retail, recording, copyrighting—and it is now moving into highly electronic areas, including Internet modification of music.

It is a very significant industry—an industry which I believe in Queensland has great potential to develop. We have a supercharger of youth and talent coming through our school system. I believe we have the best music school education system in the world. It is important that we give young people career opportunities to evolve throughout their life and that we keep music as a part of their life and allow them to be part of an industry that has a recreational component which is very significant now in economic terms. Companies like Ellaways Music in Brisbane are certainly at the forefront of furthering that cause, and I commend Ellaways for finding that niche in the marketplace. People who are taking commercial risks and doing the hard yards out there certainly need to be supported.

The Minister for Industrial Relations provided a great response to questions. I commend the minister on his very keen interest and activity, especially in working with the committee of which I am a part in terms of worker safety. The minister has had his committee out in all quarters of the state inspecting farm equipment, safety in shearing, accommodation, the diving industry and other locations because they are very significant parts of this portfolio. I again commend the minister and Estimates Committee C.