



Speech by
Ronan Lee

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

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UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (10.29 am): The great thing about representing a university such as the University of Queensland is that it gives me an opportunity to meet regularly with people who are interested in ideas, thinking and creativity. Whenever I visit UQ I am always impressed by the thoughtfulness and enthusiasm of the students. The Leader of the Opposition could learn a great deal from them. These are people who see healthy debate as an important part of learning and an important part of society. They do not see healthy debate as something that should be crushed.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me. Member for Currumbin, if you want to make a contribution, put your name on the list.

Mr LEE: I always feel a little bit more thoughtful when I visit UQ, and it is probably no surprise that last night I was pondering, while lying in bed, just why it is that the Liberals and Nationals hate university students. I have spoken in this place before about the effects of voluntary student unionism. However, it is much worse than even I thought. It is not just full-time students who are going to lose out with no clubs and societies; it is also part-time students.

The University of Queensland Union is preparing for voluntary student unionism and it is having to cut things back. One of the first things to go will be the refectory. The refectory at the University of Queensland is unfortunately now closing at—wait for it—4.30 in the afternoon. The people who lose out are not full-time arts students. They are not people like me when I was studying full-time at uni; they are mums and dads who work full-time in the workforce. They are trying to get ahead. They are studying part-time at night. They are turning up at the University of Queensland to study a degree that will take them five, six, seven or eight years part-time to complete. They want to eat a quick meal when they are on campus but, because of the Liberals' and the Nationals' policy on voluntary student unionism, they are not going to be able to do that. I am not quite sure why it is that the Libs and Nats hate students, but I have worked out why it is that students hate them.