



Speech by

Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak in relation to the report of Estimates Committee E as chair of that committee. Estimates Committee E examined the budget as it related to the portfolios of the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts and the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport. The education minister covered a wide variety of topics ranging from literacy, the rollout of prep and the skills plan to the new modern art gallery at South Brisbane. The Gallery of Modern Art is the largest modern art gallery in Australia. As members are aware, a visit to that gallery makes us feel very proud that it is located right here in Brisbane.

The Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts outlined that the total combined budget for this coming financial year is a record \$6.69 billion. He mentioned the major achievements over the last 12 months, including the rollout of the \$1 billion Queensland Skills Plan, which will ensure that the state's workforce can meet the skilling challenges of the 21st century economy. The minister made mention of the \$1 billion Tomorrow's Schools initiative. From this \$1 billion initiative \$850 million will be spent over five years to identify and deliver school renewal and regeneration projects. He stated that this is the largest one-off investment in education in our state's history and it focuses on modernising our schools and planning for the future of education. This funding is earmarked for older schools in Queensland, some of which were built in excess of 50 years ago and which are now outdated.

As I mentioned in this House yesterday, \$50 million out of this \$850 million has been allocated to five schools in the Inala region. However, I want to demonstrate to the House how the Queensland Skills Plan and this new modernisation project under Tomorrow's Schools can operate hand in hand. As part of this initiative, Glenala State High School can be modernised into a skills centre of excellence. We can network with the local business community to recognise what range of skills is needed for our growing workforce over the next 10 to 20 years. We can then link with TAFE and offer these course at Glenala State High School, thus reducing the rate of youth unemployment in the region and offering the students in my area a good chance of obtaining a job locally once they complete their secondary education. These are indeed very exciting times as this work has never been done before.

The minister also mentioned that the TAFE capital investment program will provide more than \$300 million over the next six years. The Beattie government is committed to skilling our workforce and providing opportunities to those people who complete their training.

I also make mention of the government's commitment of \$35.6 million over the next four years to improve literacy for students. The education minister has also honoured an election commitment by producing a funding program of \$3 million over three years for additional chaplaincy or pastoral care support for students. Over 130 schools seek to benefit under this program, including schools in my area.

The Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, in his address to the estimates committee hearing, started by stating that he would administer a portfolio budget of a record \$840 million. He mentioned the growth in the state and the need to further build sustainable communities across the regions, with \$4.5 million being spent on accelerating regional planning across the state.

In relation to local government reform, the minister outlined the reasons why this reform is needed. He commented on the role of the independent commission with respect to the drawing of the boundaries and announced the commencement of the Local Government Act review. I am aware that a bill relating to local government reform is currently before the House so I will not seek to expand on the comments that I have just made. Suffice to say, the end result will be stronger councils with the added ability to plan for the growth in the regions over the coming decades. This is a reform that will enable regions to plan for their future whilst still preserving the unique qualities of their regions, such as in Noosa.

On another matter, the minister made reference to the allocation of \$2.7 million through the first round of the Community Partnership Grants Program. The minister also addressed what measures he plans to take to ensure that businesses are being just as responsible as home owners in the area of water conservation. This year's budget will provide some \$20 million towards south-east Queensland's Business Water Efficiency Program.

I would like to acknowledge the local government minister, Andrew Fraser, who comprehensively answered all of the questions that were put to him by the committee. I would also like to thank the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Rod Welford, who also answered all of the questions that were put to him. I would like to pay tribute to the work done by Mr Robert McBride and his secretariat and all of the committee members, especially the deputy chair, the member for Cunningham, who is in the chamber, the member for Mansfield, the member for Nicklin, the member for Burleigh, the member for Keppel and the member for Warrego.