



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.59 pm): It is my pleasure to speak to the report of Estimates Committee C as the new education, skills and the arts spokesman for the LNP. I have read the transcript. I was interested to note the questions asked by the member for Cunningham and other questions asked of the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts. The minister was certainly quite forthcoming about many issues. I note the statement of reservations that the member for Cunningham has included in the report, and I want to speak to some of those issues contained in it.

I note that whilst at the estimates committee hearings the school closures at Blackstone and Dinmore were flagged, they were announced just a couple of days ago under the State Schools of Tomorrow program. Those closures are added to the school closures at Wynnum that were announced last year and, of course, there are more school closures planned at Inala and Innisfail. The LNP has expressed concern about these closures. Bigger is not necessarily better, and we look forward to more explanation from the minister as to exactly what is happening with this program so that Queenslanders can be reassured that the education that their children are going to receive is as good as it can be.

I note, too, at the hearing there was an announcement of an outstanding performing arts centre at Brisbane State High School. It is something that I have campaigned for, and will continue to do so, for Benowa State High School. Last Friday night I attended the secondary schools drama festival at the Gold Coast and I also recently attended a performance by the Gold Coast Youth Orchestra, which needs a home. It would be my contention that Benowa State High School, which has a proud record in such matters, would be a great place in which to place a performing arts centre. There is one at Upper Coomera State College and I know there are many others throughout the state. I will be progressing that proposal as part of my initiatives for my electorate and as part of my commitment to the arts for Benowa State High School.

I note, too, from reading the transcript that there was discussion between the honourable member for Cunningham and the minister about the computer program that was announced by Kevin Rudd. Of course, it has been revealed that for every dollar of computer value the state government has to spend \$2 to implement this program in schools. The honourable the minister said—

... I guess the key principle that you are driving at, which I agree with, is that the federal government really does need to acknowledge that there are on-costs inherent in the installation.

So whilst New South Wales has made a claim for hundreds of millions of dollars, this is obviously still subject to some negotiations here in Queensland. I think it is important that the people of Queensland understand that the promise of giving every secondary schoolchild a computer is one that came with a lot of costs that were not allowed for in the last federal election campaign.

I note, too, that in the estimates committee hearing the number of prep classes and the number of classes that had more than the average number of students was also canvassed. In terms of skills or training, there was discussion about VET. I note, too, that the LNP's commitment will follow the COAG announcements on participation and productivity. We will be placing clients, individuals and business at the centre of the system and reforming the training product, services, the information systems and regulation to meet a more demand and client driven system while also expressing our support for TAFE. I look

forward to attending a dinner next week with the honourable member for Gaven. He is a member of the new board—the statutory body of the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE. I will see him there next Monday night, along with the director, Deb Daly, and other members of the board.

I want to confirm our absolute commitment to the arts portfolio. As the honourable member for Cunningham has said, many small to medium enterprises were very concerned about some of the statements made by the honourable the minister at the estimates committee hearing about whether there was rolling annual funding or annual funding being given to some companies and, in relation to the cuts that had been initiated to some of the bodies, whether there would be any proper acquittal or how we will be able to assess that the money that is given to other organisations will lead to better outcomes in the arts.

I acknowledge the refurbishment that is happening at the Lyric Theatre, which was mentioned in the estimates committee report. I note the success of GoMA. The Hon. Joan Sheldon was always a great benefactor of the arts. I want to assure all members of this community that we will continue our support for this wonderful section of our community which is as important to people as is sport, given the success of the Beijing Olympics. As the former Premier used to say, the arts are also a reflection of how society is travelling and we need to make sure that we keep supporting the arts. With those words, I commend the report.