




Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Thursday, 4 August 2011

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: INDUSTRY, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (12.50 pm): I rise to speak on the report following the estimates hearing conducted by the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee. It is a great honour to be the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations in a Labor government that places so much emphasis on educating the future generations of Queenslanders as well as focusing on protecting workers' rights. This commitment is backed by substantial allocations in the 2011-12 state budget—a record operational education budget of \$7.4 billion and \$123.9 million for industrial relations and worker safety. In particular, our education reform agenda is again at the forefront of funding in 2011-12, with \$622 million allocated over the budget estimates to implement our flying start agenda, which includes year 7 joining high school in 2015 and further funding provided to help make kindergarten available to all children by 2014.

With so many positive initiatives happening within the education portfolio, I was surprised to read the statement of reservations from the member for Moggill—although with his constant negativity, carping and bringing down of Queensland, it should not have been a surprise at all. In particular, he made the absolutely vacuous and unsubstantiated claim that somehow by having the estimates hearing on a Friday afternoon the government was avoiding scrutiny. What a joke. The statement of reservations would be funny if it were not so serious.

This comment is even more laughable considering the member for Moggill was writing questions at the end of the hearing. He had not prepared for the hearing; he was still writing questions. He was ill-prepared and this demonstrates his lack of understanding and his lack of depth of knowledge of the portfolio. The member for Moggill follows in the fine footsteps of the member for Redlands, as he tweeted on that occasion that 'Friday is POETS day'—ping off early, tomorrow's Saturday. That is the attitude of the member for Moggill. The reality is for the member for Moggill, and I will tell him today through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that governing the great state of Queensland is a 24/7 job. The people of Queensland deserve better than someone who was writing questions at the end of the hearing and someone who was trying to get out of the hearing early so he could escape and do something else.

The most pressing issue for the member for Moggill in the state education system—and it is a system that comprises 1,227 schools, almost half a million students and almost 40,000 full-time equivalent teachers—was the issue of flood run-off at the Chapel Hill State School. Member for Moggill, do not misrepresent my comments as I speak on this today; I believe the issue of run-off at Chapel Hill is serious and that is why we have arranged for a hydraulic engineer, an arborist—who will check other matters at the school—and the director-general of education and training to visit the school in the past three weeks. We have allocated more than \$160,000 so far this year for maintenance at Chapel Hill State School, including \$129,213 for drainage works. We have injected an extra \$50 million this year into maintenance, lifting the state-wide total to a record \$134.8 million—the highest annual maintenance expenditure in the history of schools in Queensland.

But let us be clear. This issue of run-off at Chapel Hill State School has been around since the school was built in 1978—33 years ago. Can I say through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this was not a problem for National Party education ministers Val Bird, Bill Gunn, Lin Powell, Mike Ahern or Brian Littleproud or the Liberal education minister Bob Quinn. This was not a problem for them and not a problem for the member for Moggill, who has been in this House for seven years, until he raised it at the estimates hearing. This was nothing more than a cheap shot for a cheap headline in his local newspaper or a sound bite for the six o'clock news. We will continue to work with the school community to deliver an outcome for them.

The closest the LNP has got to an education policy was what Bruce McIver said at the Liberal National Party conference on 15 July—the same day as the education estimates hearing. He said that Queensland students are being brainwashed in Queensland schools. The Liberal National Party members would have the education curriculum written by politicians and party hacks like Bruce McIver, not by educators. They would have curriculum written by those party hacks and not educators. It is a slur on every teacher in Queensland schools when they are denigrated in that way.

I will not say much about the member for Mirani. He did not know the difference between a WorkCover claim and a court case. He has no idea. This is a shadow minister who cannot make the cut on the seven policy committees that have been created. In fact, there are 11 committees in total in this parliament—including the seven policy committees—and he cannot get on to one of them. The Liberal National Party have promoted two parliamentary secretaries and a backbencher to policy committees but the member for Mirani cannot make the cut. So much for the Liberal National Party's commitment to industrial relations and labour relations in this state.

I thank all government members for their contribution to a very important and thoughtful report.