




Speech by

Michael Pucci

MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (9.35 pm): I rise to speak as a member of the parliamentary Education and Innovation Committee with regard to the recent 2012 budget estimates hearings. The committee covered a broad range of issues, all of which are designed to address the critical issues facing our state. I commend the Minister for Education, Training and Employment, the Hon. John-Paul Langbroek, and the Minister for Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts, the Hon. Ros Bates, along with their respective ministerial and departmental staff, the parliamentary committee staff and my honourable colleagues whose professional execution of their duties ensured that the nuts and bolts of the recent budgetary process were undertaken so that all Queenslanders are the beneficiaries.

For too long under the former government superficial and extravagant measures were common practice. In their pursuit for opinion polls and quick fixes, critical areas were overlooked and our state began to lag behind the rest of the nation. This flawed approach to governance had to end and the people of Queensland knew it.

Throughout the estimates hearings our committee heard how the departments, under the stewardship of the respective ministers, will not only fix those flaws but make Queensland the leading state in our Federation. The most critical moment in anyone's academic development is the formative years of primary school. Here the fundamental skills are delivered and developed, enabling our students the means and tools to undertake the rigours of secondary and tertiary training. This government has recognised this need by providing over the next three years up to 600 additional prep teacher aides to schools in most need.

This significant investment in our children's future received additional support through our governments Getting the Basics Right—Literacy and Numeracy grants. The grants are targeted at providing much needed support for literacy and numeracy programs within our schools, but, most of all, empowering each individual school to utilise these funds as they see fit to achieve the best results for our students as they transition into their academic careers.

I further welcome the allocation of funds in the first round of grants to six schools within my electorate. It has taken 20 years and a new LNP government to bring about the attention and support our education system rightfully deserves. The P&Cs of the schools in Logan are also very happy to know they will receive up to \$160,000 to tackle the much needed repairs necessary for these schools due to the lack of care and attention by the former Labor government. I cannot begin to contemplate the perilous situation our schools would have found themselves in if Labor—without a 'u'—were re-elected.

Whilst before the committee, the honourable minister also outlined the steps this government will take to address the situation regarding the performance results from the NAPLAN tests. The minister outlined how the results of the assessment highlighted areas that we need to improve, but also that, by OECD standards, we are one of the highest performing areas in the OECD.

The minister also outlined our government's efforts to close the gap outlined by the Council of Australian Governments, with long-term objectives in place to dramatically reduce the void, within the decade, in the fields of reading, writing and numeracy that are present amongst Indigenous students. Also outlined by the minister, we will continue to support the schools and their communities and focus on boosting attendance, literacy and numeracy and assisting with Indigenous students' transition into secondary schooling, the work force or further study. This is a tough challenge and requires the support of the broader community. With the assistance of students, teachers, trade providers and families—and backed by a strong proactive government with clear-cut and pragmatic action plans—we will achieve our goal and we will make Queensland a greater state.

Our committee also reviewed our government's budgetary commitments to the development of the scientific, innovative, IT and artistic sectors. I would also like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and commitment shown to her duty by the minister by sitting before the committee despite obviously recovering from a serious medical procedure.

During the hearings the need for our state to evaluate our current strengths and weakness was identified. From that, our government has undertaken the necessary steps, in collaboration with our scientific and academic institutions across the broader community, to better address the current factors and pre-empt future issues that may afflict our state. This level of support and practical investment as demonstrated throughout the hearings reinforces the drastic level of neglect left behind by our former government. Once again it takes a conservative government to get the job done.

It staggers the mind to think that after 20 years the former government has little, if anything, to show besides the long-lasting legacy of debt and hypocrisy. It makes me think that the bad old days of the Bligh Labor government was nothing more than an emulation of Emperor Nero and the old parable idiom of fiddling while the Queensland economy burned. I support and commend the steps our government is taking to get our state back on track. After being in government for over six months we have achieved so much and we are on track to achieve even more. I commend this bill to the House.