




Speech By  
**Hon. John-Paul Langbroek**

**MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE**

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**APPROPRIATION BILLS: EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (10.18 pm): Can I begin by thanking committee staff and committee members for their hard work and professionalism and the committee chair, the member for Burdekin, for her chairmanship on the day. I commenced the estimates hearing by saying that the Newman government has a relentless focus on high standards and that we do not shy away from that fact on this side of the House. I would like to thank those members of the committee who engaged in the estimates process to discover more about the range of policies that this government has implemented in my portfolio to improve student outcomes in our schools and our training facilities. In schools we are focused on driving improved student outcomes by lifting the quality of the teachers at the front of the classroom, by giving schools the freedom to make their own decisions that are best for their local communities and by improving the level of behaviour in the classroom. I do not intend to answer all the questions that have been raised here by the opposition in this debate when they had five hours to do it on the day, but I will say to the member for Woodridge that a parliamentary answer to a question on notice trumps an article in the *Queensland Times*.

We are also fixing our infrastructure by cleaning up the mess left by those opposite through a \$292 million maintenance backlog, as well as planning for the future through the establishment of the Schools Planning Commission and the construction of 11 new schools, one at Highfields and 10 through a public private partnership. I also thank those members interested in the training portfolio. The release in June of the Great Skills, Real Opportunities VET Action Plan outlined the blueprint for a once-in-a-lifetime reform of the sector. The simple facts are that in Queensland we face significant economic challenges, not least of all the state of Queensland's finances. Even the good aspects of the Queensland economy, the bits that are still going strong despite the recklessness of those opposite, are facing economic challenges. In the mining sector we are facing skills shortages. As an economic lesson to those opposite, when there are skills shortages there is a lag in productivity. One of the ways that we can address this is by training Queenslanders in those qualifications that are needed in the economy. If we fill those skills shortages we will boost productivity and participation in the workforce and reap the resultant economic benefits.

There are a couple of matters that I would like to clear up from the committee hearing. There was some confusion when discussing the difference between growth and demand in relation to our new Schools Planning Commission. I note the Leader of the Opposition raised some of those issues both at the hearing and tonight in this debate. We have released the growth data for statistical area 2 level across the state. This information is up on the Government Statistician's website. The important information is demand. This is where we take the data, talk to the non-government sectors about their capacity and plans and talk to councils about where they are planning on approving developments or zoning changes. We have done this for three areas around the state: Caloundra South, Townsville and metropolitan north. Three more will follow soon: metropolitan south and Ipswich, Toowoomba and Sunshine Coast hinterland. It is not good enough to take the maps, as the opposition leader did on

the day, and interpret that into something to do with the debate about potential school closures. They are two separate processes.

The other clarification is that during the committee hearing I said in relation to accreditation arrangements for trainers and assessors that 'we will make sure that everyone is registered'. By way of clarification, our VET five-year action plan outlines at action 2.7 that accreditation arrangements for trainers and assessors will be voluntary.

I noted in my opening that I hoped the committee would focus on improving student outcomes rather than engaging in political sound bites and faux indignation. I would like to thank those members of the committee who did that. Unfortunately Labor members did not heed my warning, as they were more interested in interjecting with media grabs and pre-rehearsed lines than genuinely inquiring into the programs and initiatives that we have introduced into Queensland schools to improve student outcomes. That brings me to report No. 17 of the Education and Innovation Committee. This opposition will say and do anything to get media coverage, both on the day of estimates hearings and even subsequently. We hear from them misrepresentations and mistruths in their dissenting report. In fact, tonight the member for Woodridge has asked questions about advertising. The federal government is spending I think \$50 million on trying to sell the Gonski plans in the lead-up to the election. Kevin Rudd said in his previous iteration as Prime Minister or as opposition leader that he believed government advertising should stop in the three months leading up to an election. What has he done over the last couple of weeks? Spend millions on the New Guinea plan to send people to other countries. Do not give me that faux outrage from the opposition. I see other outrageous things in this report. They have acknowledged that we are increasing staffing by 724 teachers and teacher aides. This is a dissenting report that really is not worth the paper it is written on.