




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, Report

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (8.15 pm): I rise to speak on report No. 4, the 2015-16 budget estimates report, of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee. The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2015 for the portfolios of Education and Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

I wish to thank Minister Jones for the depth of her responses and the breadth of knowledge of her portfolios in providing fulsome answers to all questions to the point where the minister did not take a question on notice in the 6¾ hours of questioning. I also wish to express the appreciation of the committee to the ministerial staff and the departmental staff for their efforts and their involvement. Estimates is a very important process in that it provides government members with the opportunity to discuss the budget items to provide the finer detail, as well as providing the opposition the opportunity to question the minister in depth. I believe that that outcome was achieved quite successfully.

One of the cornerstones of Labor's values is education as it is the key to empowerment of the future and for the future. In this year's budget, the Palaszczuk government will invest a record \$11.497 billion to ensure Queensland students are provided with world-class education and training opportunities. It will prepare our students to meet the ever-challenging and changing society in which we live as global citizens with global issues.

Teachers in our schools, like parents, also celebrate milestones in learning—the first time a student reads or the first time they write a full sentence with meaning. But like learning to walk and talk or reading and writing, children learn these skills at different times and with different strategies. I am pleased to see \$152.4 million over three years and \$86 million ongoing to deliver initiatives under the government's extra teachers policy to lower class sizes and support high schools, including hiring up to an additional 875 teachers beyond normal growth in Queensland schools. This will support students to learn and develop skills at different rates of learning and with the highest level of support available.

The Queensland economy is starting to make some positive moves. However, with the additional \$70 million for maintenance of existing state schools, bringing the total investment to \$178 million for 2015-16, with a further \$230 million invested over the next three years from 2016-17 for state school maintenance, that means that local tradies will have more work and that will encourage them to take on an apprentice to meet the needs of the maintenance demands.

As a former principal of Townsville State High School, where the head of the science department, Sarah Chapman, is the 2013 winner of the Prime Minister's Excellence in Science Teaching Prize, I am very happy to see that the Palaszczuk government will improve the participation of students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in state schools. This will be achieved by strengthening

implementation of the Australian Curriculum for STEM, in teacher professional development and in developing partnerships with key STEM stakeholders. I wish to thank the research staff of the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee for their professionalism, hard work and support—namely, Sue Cawcutt and Melissa Salisbury, who now has moved on to another portfolio area in the parliament. I also wish to thank the government and non-government members of the committee for their participation and for their ability to work together in a rigorous and transparent manner.