




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, Report

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (8.41 pm): It is a great pleasure to speak tonight on the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee's estimates hearing. The greatest concern that the LNP government had during the estimates hearing was whether the minister has the ability to give the education portfolio the attention it deserves. She has a very, very big portfolio. Many people call it a megaportfolio. She is the Minister for Education, the Minister for Tourism, Major Events and Small Business and she is also the Minister for the Commonwealth Games. Could you imagine an LNP government not having education as a single portfolio? Could you imagine the education unions walking down the street protesting about the fact that education, which represents 20 per cent of the state's budget, did not have a stand-alone minister?

At the moment the education sector has a part-time minister. This is a ministry which involves an enormous responsibility. The minister is responsible for approximately 100,000 registered school teachers, 1,700 schools, the education and welfare of 770,000 children and an annual budget of \$9 billion. As I said, that is around 20 per cent of the state's annual budget. During the estimates hearings I pointed out that we had had a look at the minister's diaries for that first six months and—

Ms Jones: I went to more schools than John-Paul ever did!

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. What a ridiculous comparison. The comparison is embarrassing: she compares her first six months with your last six months. A review of those diaries shows that over the six months, 38 per cent of her meetings were relevant to education. Education represents 98 per cent of the budget of the minister's portfolio, yet she only puts 38 per cent of her time towards education. When I put this to the minister her flippant response was, 'See, I am a busy girl!'

Mr Langbroek: Imagine if you said that to her!

Mr MANDER: I take the interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise. Can you imagine what would happen if I called the minister a 'busy girl'? So, Minister, using your words you have been a busy girl, but you have been too busy to pick up the IT system failure for the reporting of suspicions of child abuse. You have been too busy to spend time with more school principals. If you had spent more time with school principals, you would have had more chance of picking up on that IT bungle. You have been too busy to ask the investigative questions of the bureaucrats about the IT bungle; rather, you have simply accepted at face value the advice that they gave you that the system was working. But, Minister, you have not been too busy to meet with Michael Ravbar, the CFMEU official—

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Can we put some reasonableness into this debate? Please direct comments through the chair, stop the interjecting and get on with the debate. The member for Everton has the call.

Mr MANDER: Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister has not been too busy to meet with Michael Ravbar, the CFMEU official; she has not been too busy to go to the Noosa International Food and Wine Festival dinner; she has not been too busy to officially start the Gold Coast Airport Marathon; and she has not been too busy to swan around at the V8 Supercars race in Townsville.

A government member interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection. If you get in your seat, Minister, that would be even better.

Honourable members: Ha, ha!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. Would everyone please tone it down? We have had our fun. The member for Everton has the call.

Mr MANDER: For the benefit of the school students of Queensland, I call on the Premier to urgently appoint a minister who is able to dedicate the vast majority of their time to the education and welfare of 770,000 young Queenslanders. Another consequence of the megaportfolio which has already been brought up is that through this estimates hearing we had less opportunity to put the minister under scrutiny regarding the education sector.

Ms Jones: That is not true!

Mr MANDER: Yes, it is true. I take that interjection. During the last estimates hearings we had four hours and 15 minutes to ask questions of the minister, and this time we had 3½ hours. That is not the proper scrutiny that the education department and the education sector deserve.