



Speech By  
**Verity Barton**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

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**EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE:  
REPORT, MOTION TO TAKE NOTE**

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.46 am): I rise to contribute to the debate on this report. I join my colleague, the member for Townsville in acknowledging the work of the secretariat and fellow members of the committee. From the non-government side, I acknowledge the member for Buderim and the member for Albert. I acknowledge the contributions that they make to our committee. At the outset, I acknowledge the great work done by the member for Surfers Paradise when he was the minister for education in this state. The member for Surfers Paradise was very much committed to making sure that we continued the LNP's track record of investing in Queensland schools. I know that the member for Surfers Paradise oversaw a program that facilitated the building of new schools where appropriate, based on actual data.

In addition, we had a program that dealt with the maintenance backlog that was left by the Labor Party. When the LNP was in government, the member for Surfers Paradise and the former treasurer, the member for Clayfield, invested significantly in our Queensland schools. They invested hundreds of millions of dollars to make sure that, across Queensland, we were able to deal with the maintenance backlog that was a legacy of the failed Labor governments of the past. I am incredibly proud to have been a member of a government that invested in the maintenance that our schools desperately needed so that we could fix the backlog of former failed Labor governments, which included things such as broken toilets, broken windows et cetera. I am particularly proud of the autonomy that we gave to local communities and the power that we vested in local communities. Of course, Queensland is one of the great decentralised states. The LNP very much recognises the contribution that our regions make, not only to their own communities but also more broadly to Queensland. We recognise that, when it comes to making local decisions, you cannot always make those decisions in George Street. The LNP in government had a fantastic track record of vesting power in local communities. The work that we did in dealing with Labor's backlog of school maintenance is another prime example of our commitment to vesting power and autonomy in local communities.

The member for Townsville touched on the fact that schools were given the opportunity to choose whether they used QBuild or whether they used local contractors. By having the ability to choose local contractors schools were able to make financially prudent decisions that might, in the long run, deliver more bang for their buck. The effect was twofold. The school, through its community based decisions, was able to keep money in the local community and, importantly, particularly in regional areas, it was able to make sure that jobs in those local communities were retained and maintained.

As I said, the LNP has an incredibly proud track record when it comes to infrastructure in schools in Queensland, whether it is the schools that we built over our time in government—whether under the recent government or previous governments—or whether it is investing in the infrastructure that our schools need. Ultimately, we need to make sure that our kids at school are best placed to learn. An education is the greatest gift we can give a child. If we do not have the right infrastructure and if we do

not have the right environment within which our children can learn then we are failing them. That is why the LNP when in government was committed to making sure that we delivered the best possible environment for our children.

I again acknowledge the great work that was done by the former minister for education, the member for Surfers Paradise. I know that he was incredibly passionate about making sure that our schools had their maintenance backlog that was a legacy of the former failed Labor governments dealt with. As well, he was particularly keen on seeing local schools have autonomy around decision-making because ultimately the LNP believe that local communities are best placed to make these decisions, not bureaucrats in George Street. Local school communities were vested with the autonomy to be able to do that. The member for Surfers Paradise can be incredibly proud of the great work that he did when he was the minister for education in this state.