




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (7.40 pm): I want to start by giving my thanks to the work of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Department of Education and Training for the great work that they do every day in serving the people of Queensland and their tremendous effort in the preparation work in the lead-up to budgets each year and the work that they put in for estimates to ensure that accurate information is available through that important process. I want to acknowledge their tremendous efforts. The people of Queensland are well served by the talent and dedication of these hardworking Queenslanders. I thank them for the work that they do to deliver for Queenslanders every day of the week. I thank those who helped in the preparation of the estimates process. I know that it is a hectic time, but their work is very much appreciated by me.

I thank the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee—I think it is the hardest working committee in the parliament—the chair, the member for Ferny Grove, and the secretariat. I know that a large amount of legislation goes to that committee every year. I am really grateful for their work. We have a lot of legislation that goes through our portfolios in addition to public inquiries and policy work that the committee undertakes. I thank the members from both sides of the chamber for their work.

I want to pick up very briefly the comment that was made by the member for Bundamba about committee members being more vocal at estimates. One point that I think is worth raising is that I appreciate the importance of shadow ministers coming into estimates hearings and asking questions of the government. Of course, they should. That is part of the estimates process. I believe that all committee members should have the opportunity to ask questions. I believe that the opposition members who are on that committee every day and do a tremendous job should also be given the opportunity to ask questions of the government. I am not trying to score political points; I am simply saying that all members, including those committee members who work tirelessly all year, should get the opportunity to ask questions as well.

The estimates hearing showed that the Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to all facets of training in Queensland. From the shadow minister's questioning we heard what we have heard from the LNP time and time again in government and in opposition, which is the cherrypicking of figures—not even going as far as referring to the notes in the SDS that state why the figures are what they are—to criticise completion rates being in significant decline and to not look at those apprentices' and trainees' completion rates for the 2014-16 year and 2015-16 year. When do members think those apprentices started? Under the former government. When we see a decline in completion rates for apprentices and trainees, of course, we have to look at the decline that happened under the LNP in government in the commencement area. Those opposite certainly do not want to talk about those figures, which are extraordinary. We look at a total drop of 27,900 apprentices and trainees when the LNP was in government.

Today, we heard from the shadow minister for training that TAFE did not need rescuing. That shows that the opposition has learned nothing since the last election. It has not listened to the people of Queensland, who wanted investment in our TAFEs as opposed to assets being stripped out of our TAFEs and funding being stripped out of our TAFEs. We are very proud of the work we are doing to support TAFE in Queensland and to see TAFE grow and be the premium training provider in this state.

I would have to say that there were not a lot of questions from the opposition that went to the core areas of the Justice and Attorney-General portfolio. The comments about Wicked Campers are just disappointing. When the member for Southern Downs was the Leader of the Opposition, we spoke about this issue. We agreed to take a bipartisan approach. When the opposition was in government, there was no answer. It did not have a solution. It had not acted on anything. I thought that was one issue that we would have bipartisan support on but, unfortunately, we did not.

I will pick up on the comments made by the member for Everton about overcrowding in prisons. When the LNP was in government, it never invested in courts, it never invested in the DPP, it stripped away diversionary programs and wonders why there is overpopulation. This government is getting on with the job. We are investing in the Justice area and we are proud of our record.