




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

EDUCATION (OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (5.20 pm): I support the Education (Overseas Students) Bill. The member for Whitsunday has gone on yet another rollicking romp through his electorate. I thank him for his contribution. I take the member to task though. He did forget to mention the Cannonvale State School. I will be letting the principal know about that.

I thank the committee for its work on this bill. I had the great privilege in 2009 to join a program called the Australia Latin America Leadership Program, which brings together young leaders from Latin America and Australia with a view to building long-term links between our regions. It was a very worthwhile program to be a part of. The majority of the participants came from a surprising sector. There were many from mining, there were many from the finance sector, from the agricultural sector and the energy sector, but by far the largest group were from the tertiary education sector. It was my first exposure to this sector. I worked with young people who built a career in this sector both in Latin America and in Australia and it was really the first time that I came to understand the significant economic benefits to Australia from this sector and the challenges that sector faces with the movement in the Australian dollar. It was a real eye-opener for me.

There are many significant immediate economic and cultural benefits from these types of programs. We have students paying rent, earning income and paying taxes while they are here and contributing to our diverse multicultural society. There are longer term benefits. I know for a fact that that program, which was nearly 10 years ago now, has yielded many relationships that have gone on to create business opportunities and opportunities for government and social and educational exchange between the two regions of Australia and Latin America. These will have significant long-term benefits for our entire community. Many of these benefits start with people being involved in the overseas education sector.

I see the benefits of the overseas education sector in my own community. There is a very large building being constructed on the border of my electorate in the electorate of South Brisbane at Buranda which will be filled with students from overseas. They will bring much prosperity into our local community. I meet many students when I am out doorknocking and visiting local schools. The students I meet in our local schools are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they have received to come here to Australia and participate in our educational process. I also meet many students who have gone in the other direction as well.

The principals and teachers in my electorate—in fact, my good friend the member for Mansfield would have told me about this in her time at Cavendish Road State High School—talk about the significant benefits of having overseas students in our schools. The Palaszczuk government rightly prioritises support for all aspects of the overseas students sector. This government prioritises all aspects of our education sector, unlike those opposite who sit silently while the Turnbull government takes cuts to all aspects of our education sector. No part of our sector is safe from Malcolm. I do not think he has seen a part of the education sector he does not want to cut back.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr KELLY: I will take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth. Maybe he will leave the boatsheds alone. This bill supports the overseas students sector by streamlining many processes. It will make it easier to manage and support students in both the high school and the tertiary sectors. We continue to improve and refine the way we manage this sector. It is incredibly important for our community economically, socially and culturally. It is incredibly important in securing our future as a state. I commend the bill to the House.