



Speech By  
**Hon. Shannon Fentiman**


**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

---

Record of Proceedings, 23 August 2018

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Education, Employment and Small Business Committee, Report**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (11.27 am): I was very pleased to participate in the examination of the estimates committee of my portfolio's budget area of Employment and Small Business and Training and Skills Development. I thank the committee, particularly the chair, the member for Nudgee, Leanne Linard, for their work. I thank them for their recommendation that the expenditure be agreed to without amendment.

The estimates committee hearing provided an opportunity to outline how budget allocations are supporting the Palaszczuk government's priorities of creating jobs and providing the training and skills that Queenslanders need to access meaningful work. This government is supporting Queenslanders into work through a range of important programs, such as the successful Back to Work program, established by Labor—a program that the LNP went to the election saying it was going to cut.

The North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme and the ongoing delivery of the Sticking Together pilot support vulnerable young people to find employment. We also know that small businesses are the engine room of our economy and are responsible for the vast majority of job creation, which is why for the first time our budget included a small business budget paper dedicated to informing small businesses of all the funding and support available to them across government.

The estimates committee process provided the opportunity to review the planned expenditure of more than \$950 million in training and skills. The Palaszczuk government puts training and skills front and centre of its agenda, because we know that it is the pathway to jobs. We want to make sure that people who are leaving school and transitioning into the workforce get the training they need to get decent jobs. That is why we are investing \$80 million into our Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which will provide support for up to 13,000 disadvantaged Queenslanders. We know that this program works, which is why I was very surprised to see in the LNP's election costing documents that it was again going to scrap Skilling Queenslanders for Work.

As I mentioned in the estimates hearing, it seems that the shadow spokesperson for employment and training did not even know that her party was going to cut the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. We are also investing in regional skills development and training in priority areas such as the NDIS. I am proud to have responsibility for delivering these programs.

As was discussed at estimates, our ability to deliver these programs is greatly affected by the cuts and uncertainty inflicted by the Commonwealth government. As I have said many times in this House, there have been \$70 million in cuts to our training budget. We have heard nothing from the shadow spokesperson. In fact, the shadow spokesperson has not put out one media release about employment in Queensland in her role as the shadow employment spokesperson.

I want to raise a few issues in response to the dissenting report. The opposition selectively quoted *Hansard* to say that I refused to answer questions about the criteria for changes to the Back to Work program. Let me repeat what I actually said at estimates. I did say I would speak slowly and it would be published in *Hansard* for all to see, so let me do that again, slowly, for the shadow spokesperson's benefit. The identification of areas facing significant labour market challenges is not just the latest monthly unemployment rate; the assessment of the new Back to Work areas included considerations such as broader economic conditions in local communities.

**Ms Simpson:** Release the criteria weightage! Release the actual weightage!

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I take that interjection from the shadow spokesperson. I am outlining the criteria.

**Ms Simpson:** No, you have released the documentation that you have based it on.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** And I am speaking very slowly so that the member might understand.

**Ms Simpson:** Why don't you table the criteria and the actual formula you used?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I am happy to table my speech. This is already in *Hansard*.

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Pugh): Order! Member for Maroochydore, you of all people should know better.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** As I was saying, it included consideration of matters such as broader economic conditions in those local communities and connections to employment opportunities, including the ability of unemployed people to access transport. I hope that is clear enough. The dissenting report also highlighted that the opposition either did not understand RTI or they do not care about the facts. Let us be very clear: the RTI delegations signed by ministers has no connection to the RTI processes that happen in the department. RTI is independently managed. Ministers have no authority around it when it comes to the department. This was a problem in the Newman government. There was a bit of trouble with the member for Surfers Paradise and the previous member for Moggill getting around to delegating their authority. It took them nine months after taking on their ministerial roles.

**Ms Simpson:** Seven months from your own office. You have no shame.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I know you were not in cabinet, member for Maroochydore, but your colleagues were and they took longer than this. They should spend more time working on policies and less time being tricky.

*(Time expired)*