



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2019


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment and Small Business Committee, Report

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.55 pm): The Education, Employment and Small Business Committee budget estimates hearing on 1 August reaffirmed that those opposite, the LNP, are not fit to govern—not now and not into the future. The government's 2019-20 budget for education is a record \$13.8 billion and the only question put to the minister is how much car parking do we have. We have built eight brand new schools that will open next year, we have new classrooms right around the state, there is \$1.5 billion worth of infrastructure spend this financial year alone and the priority of the LNP member of the committee is a car park on the Gold Coast on a site that would have to be five times the size of any site that I have in the electorate of McConnel. It is outrageous and goes to show that those opposite are unfit to govern—not now and not into the future.

The education of children is important. It is what makes the difference for students throughout Queensland. All we are getting from those opposite is political stunts and questions that have nothing to do with the essence of education. The chair, the member for Nudgee, did a wonderful job during the estimates hearing. As she has outlined, the majority of questions, 73 per cent, were directed to the director-general and others.

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Ms GRACE: I can hear the member for Currumbin in the background. She is like a puppet. You cannot keep her quiet because she wants to know about the car park. It is so important for the education of the students in Currumbin. I have to answer the question about the car park because without the car park we cannot educate the children. That is how important it is. The member also, do not forget, does not want to allow any kids from New South Wales into Queensland. That was the big issue last time.

In all seriousness, the Department of Education has a wonderful budget. Our students are being provided with a world-class education and all we have from those opposite are political stunts. During the estimates hearing the member for Kawana chose to politicise a very sensitive matter involving some very young students in one of our schools here in Queensland. In spite of our pleas to refrain from continuing on with the discussion, his very first question exposed the identification of the issues at hand.

I am deeply concerned by the persistent line of questioning from the member for Kawana relating to a sensitive issue at a school involving very young and vulnerable children. I am concerned that the member may have breached standing order 117(2) by providing identifying information in his first

question on the issue. I will be writing to the committee chair seeking that the committee investigate my concerns. I will be reading the transcript and will consider referring the member to the Ethics Committee. This was a serious issue that should not have had identifying information provided. It was a disgraceful display and our pleas continually went unheeded and the member continued on with his course of questioning.

As Minister for Education I am very proud of this budget. It is an honour to be the Minister for Education and to employ additional teachers and teacher aides over the next 12 months. Bringing in the \$1.5 billion infrastructure spend over the next 12 months will be an honour. An additional \$136.2 million over four years will provide additional support for students with a disability. Of course, the wonderful early childhood development program has been fully funded over the next four years to the tune of \$63.6 million.

We have increased the occupational health and safety budget by seven per cent to \$167 million. We will ensure compliance with our workplace health and safety legislation. Great work has been done on the state's workers compensation scheme, which is one of the best funds in Australia. It is an honour to be the Minister for Industrial Relations. I commend the report and I thank the committee and all those who worked hard to bring it together.