




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 15 October 2019

ADJOURNMENT

Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct, Science Centre

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.18 pm): Tonight in this House I am calling for a science centre to be included in the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct at Southport. I love science. I have a degree in it. Science opens the mind to see the world for all its potential. A strong education in science increases critical thinking and analytical skills. It is important for success across all aspects of life.

The Gold Coast is the only major city in Australia without a science centre. Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth all have their own hands-on interactive science centres, as does Newcastle, Canberra and Wollongong. The Gold Coast is one of the fastest growing regions in the country, with a larger population than some of those cities, but it is missing out.

I have talked about this issue at length with my good friends Professor Richard John and Randall Hall from Griffith's Science on the GO!. Since the launch of Science on the GO! in 2005, their programs have won awards and engaged over half a million people in STEM education initiatives. They run hands-on science experiences across the Gold Coast, Logan and northern New South Wales, driving many young people to take the next step and study at Griffith's Gold Coast campus. They share my passion for STEM and their work shows that there is a public demand for such a centre.

The health and knowledge precinct is missing a public face—somewhere to engage the community on the Gold Coast with the huge scale of what it is trying to achieve for the Gold Coast. If most people in the area, even people living in the neighbouring suburbs, were asked what the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct is, many of them would say that they have no idea. We need locals to engage with this space to help make it a success. The whole idea of the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct is to use the collaboration and proximity of Griffith University and the two hospitals to encourage scientific innovation and entrepreneurialism. A science centre would align perfectly with those aims of the precinct.

My vision would be land provided by the state government, funding from the federal government to help get the science centre established, and a commitment from Griffith University to have its staff run the centre. If getting land is not a possibility, the existing Nexus Way building, owned by the state, could be used as a trial site or the science centre could be placed on the ground level of Griffith's soon-to-be-built ADaPT Building.

This science centre could be a place where students from all Gold Coast schools visit regularly on excursions. That alone would mean thousands of visitors coming constantly to the centre. Students would no longer have to drive to Brisbane to get this sort of science education. It would be a great resource for local teachers on the Gold Coast. It would generate tourism and local jobs.

I urge the government to do everything it can to establish a science centre on the Gold Coast. Our kids on the Gold Coast deserve to have every possible opportunity in science and that science centre would make that a reality.