



Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill

Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.00 pm): I rise to speak in support of report No. 2 of the 57th Parliament's Education, Employment and Training Committee regarding the 2020-21 budget estimates process. The committee made one recommendation: that the bill be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Hon. Grace Grace, Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing; and the Hon. Di Farmer, Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development for their response to the committee's examination of the budget estimates and the passion they bring to their respective portfolios for the people of Queensland.

It was a pleasure to be part of the estimates hearing, covering service areas that are at the heart of this government's COVID response to the prosperity of all Queenslanders through our jobs and skills agenda. The 2020-21 budget continues our government's investment in job-generating infrastructure and record spending in core services essential to meet the needs of our growing state. It means more teachers and teacher aides and investment in our schools, TAFE and apprenticeships and skills programs to make sure that we have the people with the right skills to take advantage of the opportunities created by economic growth across the state.

The Department of Education budget for controlled items is \$10.29 billion for 2020-21, which is a slight increase on the 2019-20 actual expenditure. This increase is justified due to a number of items; for example, the growth in enrolments, additional expenses associated with the National School Reform agenda, the bilateral agreement, funding for election commitments and the transfer of racing functions to the Department of Education. Total capital purchases for the education department for 2020-21 is forecast at \$1.65 billion. The capital works budget is largely for construction and refurbishment of school education facilities. This investment supports thousands of jobs across our state.

Free TAFE, payroll tax incentives and discounts, Skilling Queenslanders for Work, Back to Work, small business grants and COVID adaptation grants are all initiatives that are focused on supporting Queenslanders and our small businesses through COVID. This support to our small businesses has helped them to invest, diversify and grow. It has allowed Queenslanders to get the skills they need to get jobs or keep jobs. I acknowledge the Minister for Employment and Small Business and the Minister for Training and Skills Development and the support provided to the people in CQ.

The Department of Employment, Small Business and Training budget for controlled items is \$1.46 billion in 2020-21. The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020, for the committee's areas of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. I commend the report to the House.