



Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**


**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

**Education, Employment and Training Committee,**

**Report**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (4.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of report No. 8 of the 57th Parliament for the Education, Employment and Training Committee regarding the 2021-22 budget estimates process. The committee made one recommendation—that is, that the proposed expenditure be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

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

There are so many great programs being delivered. I am going to talk about a couple that have made a significant difference on the ground in my electorate. I think I can speak on behalf of all members of the House when I say that Skilling Queenslanders for Work is being well received. I welcome the \$80 million per annum ongoing from 2021-22. Skilling Queenslanders for Work is targeted to help disadvantaged jobseekers gain the skills and knowledge they require to enter and stay in the workforce. I have been to many graduations, and it is always pleasing to hear of graduates not being able to attend their graduation as they have already gained employment.

Another great program that has been well received is Back to Work, with up to \$140 million over four years from 2021-22 to help eligible businesses take on a person who has been unemployed for an extended period of time and to help people into employment. This is great in assisting particularly our younger people to enter the workforce. The dignity of work can never be underestimated.

Total capital purchases for the Department of Education for 2021-22 are forecast at \$1.447 billion. The capital works budget is largely for construction and refurbishment of school educational facilities. This investment supports thousands of jobs across our state. Within this expenditure is the school halls program. I am very pleased that the Hall State School in Rockhampton is receiving funding for a hall and multipurpose centre. The school currently has no shaded area where

all students can come together for assembly. Another program is Advancing Clean Energy Schools. I am aware that a few schools in my electorate have received funding under this program. Programs like this make a real difference to our students and teachers.

Another area of interest for me is the increased support for the Queensland racing industry through the allocation of 35 per cent of revenue from the point-of-consumption tax, estimated to be additional net funding of \$41.3 million over two years.

It amazes me that opposition members say they did not receive their fair share of time. They had 60 per cent of the time, which equates to 223 minutes in which they were able to ask questions. The other pleasing thing to note is that ministers were able to answer every question and there were no questions taken on notice. It shows how well prepared our ministers are in responding.

The committee has recommended that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2021-22, for the committee's area of responsibility be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment. I commend the report to the House.