



Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 31 August 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.02 pm): This side of the House is passionate about a great start for every student in Queensland. Those opposite only whinge. That was obvious at the estimates hearing for the Education, Employment and Training Committee. I thank the committee chair, the member for Redlands—happy birthday to her—all committee members and the committee secretariat. I thank the minister. The minister did a wonderful job talking about all of her achievements as Minister for Education. When I go to schools, teachers and students say to me, 'We love Minister Grace. She's fun, she's caring and she cracks us up. She is warm and a great education minister who also knows how to run a tight ship.'

I also thank outgoing director-general, Tony Cook, for his service to the Department of Education. He is leaving us in Queensland and heading down south to the ACT. I recall when representing Minister Grace at the education council in Adelaide a few years ago Professor Gonski pulled me aside and said that Tony Cook is the best director-general in all of Queensland and how lucky we are to have him in Queensland. I thank Tony for his service. His replacement will certainly have big shoes to fill.

I also thank all of the departmental staff who work tirelessly with the minister to prepare for estimates. They prepared for a range of possible questions, but, unfortunately, a lot of their preparation was untouched on the day because of a lack of good, detailed and targeted questions from those opposite about the education department and about how our government is delivering for schools, students and staff right across Queensland.

During the estimates hearing there was not a single question from those opposite about pedagogy, about the department's inclusion policy, about how schools are supporting students with a disability or intellectual impairment. There was not a single question about teacher recruitment or teacher and student wellbeing. There was not a single question about schools in Indigenous communities or the application of the Australian curriculum in our schools.

The LNP did not ask about how the 2021-22 state budget continues the Palaszczuk Labor government's proud record of giving every child a great start and engaging young people in learning no matter where they live in Queensland. The LNP did not ask about the Palaszczuk government's record education budget—a \$15.3 billion investment in schools and early childhood education which continues to deliver for Queensland children and students from Far North Queensland to the Gold Coast and

beyond. I am proud that in this 2021-22 state budget the Palaszczuk Labor government is investing almost \$1.9 billion in school infrastructure spending to maintain, renew and build new facilities, including 10 new schools, supporting more than 4,100 jobs across the state. The LNP did not ask about school halls either. They did not want to know about our fantastic \$235 million program which will deliver new or upgraded halls and which will support 775 jobs.

We know it makes a big difference for children starting school when they have been to kindy in the year before prep. That is why I am proud that the Palaszczuk Labor government is investing \$202.9 million from the 2021-22 to the 2024-25 financial year and \$64 million per year ongoing after that to support the continued provision of universal access to early childhood education in the year before school. In 2021-22 this will result in a total investment of \$187 million to ensure Queensland families can access affordable, quality kindy programs, no matter their life circumstance.

While I am on my feet, I take this opportunity to wish all of the early childhood educators a very happy Early Childhood Educators' Day tomorrow. I thank every single early childhood educator right across Queensland for the work they do to improve the lives of young people and their families to give them a bright start to their education.

The Palaszczuk government is not just investing in school infrastructure. This year's budget is about investing in Queensland's people and our future. Our teachers truly are the foundation of the world-class education system we have here in Queensland, setting up our kids for a great future. We have committed to employing 6,190 new teachers and 1,139 new teacher aides over the next four years. We are investing almost \$20 million in our Turn to Teaching program to provide 300 aspiring teachers with financial support, mentoring and paid teaching internships to complete their teaching qualification and take up a guaranteed teaching position. This is a program I am looking forward to seeing the results of. I am also looking forward to chairing the new Queensland Resources Council trade to teach working group where we are encouraging people who might be working in a trade to consider changing over to becoming a teacher.

The 2021-22 education budget will also provide \$40 million towards our \$100 million three-year student wellbeing package to provide every state school with access to a wellbeing professional and to pilot GPs in 20 state secondary schools across the state. I commend the report to the House.