



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.38 pm): I commend the Education, Employment and Training Committee for its budget estimates report. I want to acknowledge the work of the chair, the member for Redlands, and the other members of this committee, along with the Clerk and the parliamentary staff. As the Premier mentioned, we have had an election, we had a budget and then we had the estimates process. It is a tribute to everyone in this House given all of the work that happens to make all of this work so smoothly.

The 2020-21 record education budget delivers for every single Queensland student. On the day I would not have minded some of the questions that the member for Southern Downs just raised, but unfortunately—

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Order, members! Member for Mudgeeraba. Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: I do not think the member for Southern Downs asked one question. He comes in here and talks about a process that is overtaken by others on his own side and the poor member has to languish by and not ask any of the questions that he wants answers to. I do feel sorry for the member for Southern Downs who I actually have a lot of time for. I think that his inability to ask questions is an indictment more on how those opposite organise themselves than the time allocated during estimates.

I agree that there are record amounts of money that we are spending in Education and proudly so: our school infrastructure budget supporting jobs for tradies and labourers, our teachers, our teacher aides and the staff who are at the school. Honestly and truly, what we are spending is second to none around Australia. We have allocated \$180 million over three years for new school infrastructure in the non-government sector. We have even improved the amounts that they get as well. There is \$235 million for multipurpose courts that I know a lot of members in this House want. Many have been delivered.

Mr Harper: Hear, hear!

Ms GRACE: I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa. There is \$433 million for new classrooms and \$45 million for shovel-ready projects. Our budget spend has been \$5.2 billion since we have been in government. We are very proud of what we have been able to achieve. The budget

includes a \$100 million pledge to provide psychologists or similar wellbeing professionals in every state school. We are trialling 20 GPs in schools to deliver early diagnoses. That is a fundamental package that we look forward to delivering over the next four years.

For these reasons it is so disappointing that the opposition members did not ask me a single question in the estimates hearing about our new schools, about our new performing art centres or about our new classrooms. They come in here and say how important they are, but during estimates they were too focused on mudraking and throwing dirt. That is really all they were interested in.

The performance of the member for Maroochydore in asking me to somehow answer a question on a matter that the CCC decided that it would not investigate was absolutely laughable and arrogance beyond extreme. Then there was the member for Kawana with his pontificating about how different workers are being treated in the department and tabling documents which basically was all hot air and no substance. We have seen him come into this House and denigrate public servants who have then been referred to the CCC where once again it is found to be hot air and totally unsubstantiated.

They are the games that those opposite play. There were no real questions about the budget or education. There are no genuine questions about or interest in new schools, land we are purchasing or what we are doing with air conditioning et cetera. They just throw dirt. Those opposite know it, the people of Queensland know it and that is why they are complaining about not having enough time for questions. Let me tell members, there will be four more years to come because the performance of those opposite is not very good.

Mr Bleijie: Arrogant!

Ms GRACE: It is not arrogant, it is a fact.

Mr Bleijie: It is hubris!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, cease your interjections.

Ms GRACE: It is arrogant to say those opposite are going to win big time because on their performance in estimates they will be sitting there opposite for a long time.