




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Queensland University of Technology Amendment Bill 2021. From the outset I would like to thank my fellow committee members and all those individuals who made submissions to the inquiry, which was a total of three. The bill is quite straightforward. There were two recommendations. Of those recommendations I am pleased that the minister has said the government is going to accept the second recommendation, which we felt was pretty important to look into. That recommendation was—

The committee recommends that the Minister amends the Bill to clarify that an elected academic staff member or an elected professional staff member of the QUT Council who ceases to be a member under new sections 77 and 78 of the Bill continues to be eligible to fill a casual vacancy under section 20A ...

We thank the minister for listening to the concerns of the committee. As I said, it is a pretty straightforward bill. It reduces the number of members on the QUT Council, which currently has 22 comprising three official members—the chancellor, the vice-chancellor and chairperson. The former one appointed eight members, nine elected members et cetera. The new legislation decreases the number to 15. I found it quite interesting that the chancellor would be considered an external member.

One thing I am concerned about when it comes to the university sector is the loss of international students. That is a major issue for all universities and certainly for the Gold Coast. International education is a multibillion dollar industry for the Gold Coast in that people come here and contribute to the local economy. All layers of government need to focus on getting those students to come back. I know there are a lot of students coming from overseas—from Japan, China, India and even Colombia. It appears there are new markets for students from those areas. Getting international students back will certainly help the Gold Coast economy. My wife was a student when she first came to Australia. She loved it so much that she never left.

Mr Perrett: It must have been you!

Mr BOOTHMAN: I would not say that! I do not think it was me.

The good thing about this bill is that in the long run it will create efficiencies in the governance processes of the university. One of the submitters—the union—did speak against the changes. Having said that, though, the changes will create a layer of efficiency in the running of the university. The university put out information on the proposed changes over a period of two years. Some 65,000 emails were sent out seeking input. While there was only a very small amount of input from people in the university, I think the university adequately asked for input and people's opinions. In spite of the concerns outlined by the union, the university was very proactive in getting people's opinions. This bill is uneventful, but it will have deep ramifications for QUT going forward.