




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.11 pm): Being a lover of all things musical, I noted with great interest the contribution of one of the previous speakers, the member for Surfers Paradise, who commented that, in relation to his interaction with QIT, as it was then known, one of his favourite concerts was the precursor to Icehouse: Flowers. They were a great band, but I can recall many a night at QUT as a student myself, part of the alumni. I thank the member for Lytton for acknowledging many of the members of this august chamber who learned a lot on the other side of this block. My greatest concert was about a decade ago: Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. That was a really great night!

I note there are approximately 52,000 students. In fact, my favourite student is my youngest son, Lachlan, who is also meant to be doing an exam hopefully today. It will be a competition. Because of the pivot QUT has had to do in the last 20 months with online study, hopefully he will in fact be doing his exam online and not playing *Halo*, but we will find out when the results come out in a few weeks time. I have to give QUT a lot of praise and credit before getting into the nitty-gritty of the bill. Many academic institutions, particularly universities, really did have to pivot on a dime in relation to the way they deliver their online courses. I do congratulate everyone involved because the challenges they have been subjected to in the last 20 months or thereabouts have been absolutely unprecedented, to use that word for the millionth time in this chamber.

I am very proud of the fact that I obtained my undergraduate degree from the University of Queensland, but I return to the fact that the QUT's motto is 'A university for the real world', and I absolutely agree with that. I did a graduate certificate, graduate diploma and a Masters in Property Economics at QUT. It was very hands-on and I really enjoyed all of the courses. In fact, at one stage I was on the academic tutors roll, and I did that for a couple of years. I have to say that I was not meant to be an academic—I much preferred working in the real world—but I do acknowledge the great foundation that QUT gave me.

In relation to the Queensland University of Technology Amendment Bill 2021 I too want to thank the committee. Some speakers at the very start of this debate mentioned that this particular bill is perhaps a little bit dry, but I beg to differ. I think the hallmark of societies are the way they are defined as a real world city by their arts offer but also their higher education institutions. I know there are some members of this particular chamber who have been teachers at universities, high schools or primary schools. Having a wife who has been a teacher going on nearly 30 years, I always say that anyone who teaches, particularly at higher institutions, has one of the noblest professions of all.

I note that the primary objective of this bill is to implement governance reforms for QUT to enable an appropriate balance between the number of members and the mix of the board's composition, and that is in fact the governance of the QUT Council. As many speakers have said, being a fairly procedural bill, this bill in fact proposes to reduce the size of the QUT Council from 22 to 15 members with the following changes of composition: three official members—the chancellor, vice-chancellor and chairperson of the academic committee—so there is no change there; three members appointed by the Governor in Council, reduced significantly from eight; five elected members, reduced from nine; and

four additional members, increased from two, who must be part of the good old QUT alumni. I do not profess to know the ins and outs of the administration of QUT or any higher institution, for that matter. Coming very much from the corporate world, to me that sounds clean. It sounds as though the governance will still be protected and I think, if anything, enhanced in terms of the council's ability to make fluid decisions.

We have made it very clear from the outset that the LNP will not oppose the QUT Amendment Bill. I did read with interest the committee recommendations and some of the views of the various stakeholders. I simply point out that at the end of the day many people got their grounding in politics as a result of student campus politics. I worked full-time after leaving high school. I always studied part-time so I cannot regale the House with tales of the battles between the right and the left on campus, but I know plenty of people who can. I will always say in defence of QUT that I know people to this day who studied many years ago when many of us had fine heads of hair like I once proudly had—not now, but once I did, so I am not misleading parliament. A lot of the fine men and women who have gone through the ranks of the ALP and the former Liberal and National parties, now the LNP, got their grounding in the essence of democracy and the importance of striving to serve your local communities, and it all harks back to the way they actually understood what QUT really meant.

Like the member for Surfers Paradise, I remember when it was QIT. This is my personal view, but I think maybe many years ago when it was an institute of technology it did not have the cachet. When the reforms came through and it too became a university of technology, in terms of cachet it grew and grew. The 'sandstone seven' will always be important, but many people will put QUT as their first preference now because of the way it has matured and grown with this fine state, so I take this opportunity to acknowledge a fine institution.

I have made it very clear that I am proud as punch to be a member of this great chamber, but when I look back on my past I am very proud of the time I spent as an alumnus of the Queensland University of Technology. I would like to close my contribution with this thought. The fact that QUT is now more than just purely somewhere to go and learn a professional body of knowledge is enshrined by the fact that, even as the shadow minister for transport and main roads, I get involved with the Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, CARRS, which does a magnificent job when it comes to enhancing road safety in this great state. They are a research body through QUT. Because I am also challenged by a font size about 0.6, with the use of spectacles I will just quote directly from this CARRS publication, which states—

Goal 1: To undertake high-quality research which has strong impact on policy, practice and scientific endeavours

...

Goal 2: To build capacity in the transport, occupational and community safety fields by providing high-quality educational and professional development programs—

...

Goal 3: To engage with government, industry and the community to improve transport, occupational and community safety

...

Goal 4: To enhance the skills and expertise of the Centre's staff and students—

...

Goal 5: To ensure the Centre has the human, financial and infrastructural capacity to achieve its Mission

The bottom line is that CARRS is another one of those research bodies from QUT that actually goes to the very heart and soul of saving the lives of Queenslanders. Not far from where I am speaking today, just a couple of blocks to my left, is an institution that I adore. It has moulded the hearts and minds of countless tens of thousands of men and women. Whether they then go on to partake in the democratic process here or not is irrelevant. That particular institution has helped make Queensland the great state it is. I take this opportunity in closing to thank the Queensland University of Technology for everything it has done. I am very proud to support this bill.