



Speech By  
**Kim Richards**

**MEMBER FOR REDLANDS**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2022


## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

#### **Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

#### **Appropriation Bil**

#### **Education, Employment and Training Committee, Report**

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.43 pm): The committee has recommended the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2022, be agreed to. On behalf of the committee, I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker Lister, as deputy chair of the committee. We had an excellent day that was rigorous and robust but also respectful. I thank you as deputy chair, committee members and the substitute members for that. When talking about being fair and balanced, I note that 61 per cent of time for questions went to non-government members with 39 per cent of time going to government members. The member for Kawana brought his usual colour, character and flair to the day so I thank him for that.

Education is a substantial part of the budget at \$16.907 billion. I think it speaks to our government's investment in education and that was certainly interrogated on the day. There is a lot of great work going on in terms of programs and services. There is also a lot of capital works investment. I do not think there is a member in this place who has not seen their schools provided with uplifts. We now have the tuckshop grants being provided and I know that that has been the talk amongst all of my P&Cs.

There has been some fantastic work done in terms of infrastructure. Of course, it would be remiss of me not to mention air conditioning. I know it was a huge thing for the schools in the Redlands to get air conditioning. On top of that we have the ACES program providing solar panels to create and generate the energy to power the air conditioning to keep our kids cool in school. There is a lot of work being done there.

There has also been a lot of work done around student wellbeing and mental health and providing GPs in our schools. The committee looked at the Share the Dignity program in Queensland schools. I know that the young ladies in all of my schools are extraordinarily grateful to have access to that program.

The committee also talked about asbestos in schools and on school grounds. We know that there are many schools across Queensland that have asbestos. I commend our P&Cs, school principals and school communities for the effort they put into making sure everyone is informed about where asbestos exists and the processes involved through the AMPs. I sat through the Thornlands State School P&C's asbestos training. It was highly informative. Well done to the department in getting that program out to schools.

The committee also looked at the boost to broadband. That will be important. It is a substantial uplift and was a recommendation in the Auditor-General's report. Investing in the technology and providing that bandwidth for our students is very important.

In terms of the portfolio area of the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, this is another big budget at \$1.3 billion. There are an awful lot of programs to support small businesses right across Queensland. It is good to see the investment in the office of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner. She is doing great work for our small businesses and came to the fore throughout COVID. I know that she has helped a lot of businesses in my area and I am certain she has helped many others right across Queensland. The Mentoring for Growth program is a terrific program that we are investing in. The Business Basics grants are excellent in terms of supporting one of our biggest employer groups, that being small businesses.

It is fantastic to see the investment in TAFE and TAFE infrastructure. As a committee we went and visited the Mount Gravatt TAFE. It was fantastic to see the investment in the Fashion Centre of Excellence, in the horticulture program and other programs there. There is a lot of good work being done in terms of investing in skills and training. We know that that will continue to be a challenge as go forward. I look forward to seeing the federal government, under Anthony Albanese, deliver the workforce summit. That should be excellent and dovetail nicely with the work we are doing in Queensland under Minister Farmer.

I thank all of the ministers' staff, their directors-general and the departmental officers. An awful lot of work goes into pulling together estimates. They did a fantastic job. I commend everybody on what I thought was a robust, rigorous and informative estimates process.