




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.39 pm): On 21 February 2022 the Education, Employment and Training Committee of the 57th Queensland Parliament resolved to conduct a public works inquiry into the Mount Gravatt TAFE upgrade project with terms of reference set out in accordance with section 94 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001.

With a total budget of \$19.78 million, the upgrade project for the Mount Gravatt TAFE included such works as the creation of a Fashion Centre of Excellence; the renewal of the A block cafeteria and hospitality facilities; new signage; upgrades and refurbishment of the A block administration, including the facilitation of relocating TAFE Queensland's corporate team from the Brisbane CBD to Mount Gravatt; upgrades to horticulture, general learning areas as well as pedestrian pathways and external lighting; upgrades to the G block facade and the entry deck and walkway; the revitalisation of the theatre; and creation of a new horticulture maker space area; the relocation of security and the installation of new CCTV; and, finally, the refurbishment of J block to provide tenants, including social enterprises, with safe and fit-for-purpose spaces. It is clear in the committee report that these works were welcomed by various stakeholders.

Within the committee's scope of inquiry were matters such as the stated purposes of the works and the apparent suitability of works for the purpose; the necessity for, and advisability of, the works; whether value for money was achieved, or likely to be achieved, by the works; consideration of the impacts of the works on the community, economy and environment; the procurement methods for the works; and the suitability of the works in meeting the needs and achieving the stated purpose of the work.

I acknowledge that on 18 October 2022 report No. 26 of the Education, Employment and Training Committee was tabled and included the following considerations and conclusions of the committee: that the building upgrades are suitable for their purposes; that the project was necessary and advisable and that the decision to upgrade the facilities at the campus was reasonable; that the project was reasonable value for money; that the cost revenue and recurrent costs are reasonable; that the work had a positive impact on the community and economy; and that measures to minimise the impact of the project on the environment are satisfactory. It also concluded that the procurement method for the work was suitable, that the balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory and that the performance of the constructing authority, the consultants and, importantly, the contractors for the work was satisfactory. Accordingly, just one recommendation was made by the committee: that the Legislative Assembly notes the contents of the report.

Whilst the overall findings of this report are encouraging—particularly with respect to value for money, procurement processes and the scope of works carried out—it stands in stark contrast to the unfortunate recent examples of other infrastructure projects delivered via other government agencies,

including those under the responsibility of the Minister for Education. Just last year, the Queensland Auditor-General reported a staggering cost blowout of more than \$23 million across two education infrastructure projects: the Brisbane South State Secondary College and the Fortitude Valley State Secondary College. Stringent delivery of infrastructure projects, with appropriate protocols and mechanisms in place to protect Queensland taxpayers from costly overruns, is critically important and must be continued in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the Education, Employment and Training Committee of the 57th Queensland Parliament for its thorough report. There were certainly great contributions from both sides of the House and members of the committee in relation to their evaluation of this important project, from those who made submissions and from the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, the Department of Energy and Public Works and TAFE Queensland. I know that they put an immense amount of time and effort into preparing their submissions and the information they provide to committees. Without those departmental representatives who do a lot of research and prepare information—without all of that being done—members of the committee would not be able to make detailed contributions and conclusions when they finalise these reports.

I commend the secretariats of the various Queensland parliament committees because, likewise, they do a tremendous amount of work in preparation not only for the hearings that take place but also in receiving the submissions and ensuring all of the agendas and the papers are available for the committee members to undertake their deliberations, even when committees do site visits as well. I commend the committee secretariat as well.