



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation Bill**

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.41 pm): I would like to congratulate Minister Grace for her outstanding stewardship of the education portfolio and delivering on behalf of the Palaszczuk government a record budget of \$17.8 billion for schools and early education. The Queensland education system is delivering world-class education to our Queensland students, no matter where they live.

In my relatively new role as the Assistant Minister for Education, I have had the pleasure of getting out and meeting teachers and students in Central Queensland. The outstanding work being achieved in our small state schools is remarkable. For some of our smaller communities, schools are the hub and meeting place for families.

Capella State School has been educating students for 140 years. They celebrated their milestone with their own YouTube song and video clip titled *Capella Country Life*, written and performed by the students and proudly presented at their 140th celebration day. It was a real treat.

Just down the road from the primary school, Star FM radio station is run by the students at Capella State High School. The high school also boasts ribbons for their prize cattle. The high school also has an outstanding music department. This proves that students do not have to be in a large coastal school to have a quality education.

Principal Sean Maher at Emerald State High School told me that he is getting more teachers applying for work at his school than he can employ. We know that this is not the same across the state. That is why Minister Grace has initiated and funded the Trade to Teach program—a program upskilling our tradies looking for an opportunity to take their much sought after trade skills into our classrooms as fully qualified teachers. There are also the return teaching programs.

Free kindy is the latest buzzword around young families. Up to \$4,600 in cost-of-living relief will be delivered to families when four-year-olds access free kindy from 1 January next year. I met with C&K Chief Executive Officer Dr Sandra Cheeseman at Slade Point kindy. She said that play-based education in the early years of learning will set our young ones up to be school ready. I know from my experience as a teacher that in early education staff can pick up health issues like hearing and sight issues and coordination problems. These only become apparent in more formal settings. These may be detected in kindy, allowing an opportunity for appropriate supports to be put in place before children start prep.

We need to be conscious of water safety for our young children. A good way to keep them safe is for them to learn to swim. Eligible four-year-olds are able to access one of 30,000 SwimStart vouchers.

We know that education is a passport to a person's future. Having quality learning places is a must for students. This budget delivers the necessary funding for ongoing maintenance and upgrades at Mackay schools. We will see refurbished classrooms, new and improved playgrounds, fencing and, everyone's favourite, tuckshops. School is for everyone.