



Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**  
**APPROPRIATION BILL**  
**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**  
**Appropriation Bill**

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

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.24 pm): In a number of previous estimates debates I have been critical of the protection racket frequently run by Labor committee chairs to protect incompetent Labor ministers. However, this time, in good faith I cannot say that about my experience under the chair of this committee, the member for Miller. It might surprise many in this place to learn that I thought the member for Miller did a pretty reasonable job and was relatively fair, for my part at the very least.

**Mr Watts:** You've changed!

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I have not changed. However, this time the shortfall was a minister who was out of his depth. I have to be honest that I was not shocked but I was very disappointed. I thought that, given that this was the member for Bundamba's first estimates process, he would have been more prepared and across his brief but, sadly, I was wrong. I am not sure if it was a deliberate tactic for the minister to be uninformed about what is going on in his department or if he is genuinely not across what is happening in the department. Nonetheless, Queenslanders should be very concerned.

What detail I could pull from the Minister for Training and Skills Development is that TAFE is delivering a huge amount of training to up to 146,000 students in the last financial year. That is 20,000 more students than the year before. However, only an extra 146 TAFE teachers and tutors have been employed to handle that demand. Class sizes are ballooning and teachers are working overtime to meet the demand. That is not my view; that is the testimony that was before the committee. The numbers speak for themselves. Members can imagine the strain that that is placing on staff. Despite the rhetoric of those opposite, in this budget there is no additional FTE for TAFE. None. Not one. Not a single extra TAFE teacher is provided for under this government. This Labor government claim to be big supporters of TAFE but they have allocated no additional staff for TAFE, despite the significant increase. They are asking TAFE teachers to do more with less, despite the rhetoric that they so often come in here and spout.

The minister said that this was a record budget when, in fact, the funding allocated to the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training was cut by \$191 million compared to the expenditure for the previous financial year. They have cut \$191 million. This budget is all over the shop. The Queensland Skills Strategy, which once again those opposite love to talk about, is to run from 2024 to 2028. However, funding is allocated only to 30 June 2026. Only 4.2 per cent of the \$370 million they so frequently like to skite about is allocated for any measures post 30 June 2026 and, in fact, for the last year, 2027-28, there is zero. There is not a single dollar in the budget under their Skills Strategy. That is this Labor government's plan: a whole year with not a single dollar allocated to skills and training.

As is so often the case in my portfolio areas, this Labor government is all about trying to keep Labor members of parliament in jobs rather than keeping Queenslanders in jobs and getting Queenslanders into new jobs.

I was pretty disappointed on behalf of all Queenslanders to find that the minister was unaware of the number of small businesses that have been affected by crime. Business owners tell me that we must put the rights of victims first and we must restore consequences for actions. They tell me that enough is enough. The crime crisis is costing Queensland small and family businesses. The price is in replacing stock, repairing damaged property and protecting staff. It is a cost that many business owners tell me they cannot afford.

Imagine what those small and family business owners thought when they heard the Labor Minister for Small Business say that they could get a \$5,000 Business Basics grant for a bit of CCTV. It was an insult. It is an insult. Businesses are struggling because of the failures of this Labor government and to suggest that a small number of Queensland's 482,000 small and family businesses can access a \$5,000 grant for CCTV is a slap in the face. The grant process is completely flawed. Through estimates, we found out that \$176 of every \$1,000 allocated is spent on administration—that is, 17.6 per cent of grant money allocated by this government is spent on administration and not on supporting small businesses. That is not good enough.

Who can forget the moment when the member for Rockhampton asked a question from the wrong section and caught the minister nervously on the hop and unprepared for his first-ever Dorothy Dixer? He did get there eventually and delivered another soulless prepared diatribe. That was so emblematic of this tired third-term Labor government.