



Speech By  
**Corrine McMillan**


**MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD**

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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**

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (6.14 pm): I am darned sure that slogans like that are not going to assist youth justice matters here in Queensland. We are delivering what matters to Queensland. I rise to reflect on my greatest passion: public education and justice for young people in Queensland.

The Putting Queensland Kids First plan is the government's \$500 million investment over four years to give our kids the opportunity of a lifetime through an initiative that supports vulnerable families to access quality early childhood programs and health and other support services. We are keeping Queenslanders safe. Our \$1.28 billion community safety plan tackles the root causes of crime, investing in grassroots early interventions which have been researched and are evidence-based. These programs have been proven to reduce the offending and reoffending rates of young people.

We are keeping students engaged in their education through a comprehensive \$288 million package of alternatives to mainstream schooling, including FlexiSpaces and Pathways colleges. The research clearly states that if we keep students engaged in education the chance they will enter a life of crime is much diminished. We are helping Queensland families who are struggling to meet all of the cost-of-living demands in their household budgets through our \$15 million School and Community Food Relief fund and providing a further 140,000 free laptops for students in Queensland's most disadvantaged areas. We know that children living in poverty are most likely to enter a life of crime.

We are continuing to invest in our greatest assets—our education workforce, of which I am proud—with an extra 535 teachers and 323 extra teacher aides in 2024-25. Why was it that, when I was the principal at Glenala State High School, under the Newman government, my student numbers went up yet my teacher numbers went down? Why was that?

We have listened to teachers and principals across the state and non-state education sectors through ministerial round tables, and we acknowledge and are responding to workforce challenges. Our initiatives include a \$55.5 million teacher workforce package, announced by Minister Di Farmer at the estimates committee hearing. That includes: \$25.7 million to expand the Turn to Teaching Internship Program, with an additional 200 places; \$10.5 million to expand the Trade to Teach Internship Program, with an additional 30 places; and \$18.3 million to provide a recognition of service payment of \$1,200 for 2024 and 2025 on top of the \$900 payment already made. The payment is for state school teachers working in high-priority locations in Queensland.

We are piloting Grow Your Own Workforce approaches in three regions that are experiencing the greatest teacher shortages—Far North Queensland, North Queensland and Central Queensland. This is not new. For 30 years, or longer, we have had workforce challenges in these parts of remote Queensland. The Grow Your Own pilots will explore teacher workforce initiatives targeted at the needs and context of each region, and I understand that the first local committees met yesterday.

We are increasing our tailored support for students, with 2,000 extra support staff and professional resources to help students living with a disability to learn easier. We continue to improve, upgrade and expand our school facilities, with the \$1.3 billion capital program including two new schools opening this year. We are focused on the now while also making long-term investments in the lives of young people and their families that will ultimately lead to a safer, more prosperous future for everyone.

All of this and more is in vast contrast to the opposition, which has no fiscal rigour, no positive policies and nothing more than slogans and criticisms. Let's not forget the opposition's record when it was in government. I knew it well. I lived it every day. When it was in government, education programs and supports to groups such as the Queensland Association of School Tuckshops and non-government school parent organisations were cut; the teacher staffing model changed; student-to-teacher ratios worsened; there were no EBs for teachers or teacher aides; and there were only 11 mental health and wellbeing professionals employed across 1,264 schools.

During that time, eight schools were closed, including one in my electorate—Old Yarranlea State School. Nyanda State High School was also closed, and all 130 students had to go to Glenala State High School over a weekend. The Barrett Adolescent Centre was closed. Those opposite planned to close another three schools—Coorparoo Secondary College, Everton Park State High School and Wyreema State School—and 50 others were being looked at.

I congratulate Minister Di Farmer on her leadership and vision for public education and youth justice in Queensland. I am very proud of public servants and what they deliver for the lives of our young people across our state.

*(Time expired)*