



Speech By  
**Margaret Nightingale**


**MEMBER FOR INALA**

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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 NIGHTINGALE** (Inala—ALP) (4.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the estimates committee report from the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee. I am proud to be a part of this committee and I thank the committee, the ministers, their teams and all who contributed to the estimates process. What is clear from the contributions during estimates is that the Miles Labor government understands that education is the cornerstone of a bright future, and we are unwavering in our commitment to ensuring every child in Queensland receives the high-quality education they deserve. This commitment is reflected in our record-breaking \$20.9 billion education budget. During estimates, we heard about a range of transformative initiatives such as our Putting Queensland Kids First strategy, which gives children the best start in life. However, I note that in a statement of reservation from the opposition they suggested the estimates process did not reveal any plan. I understand their confusion because the LNP could not spot a plan if they fell over it, let alone come up with one of their own. In fact, the estimates committee hearing outlined many plans and initiatives from the government.

The \$106.7 million Student Wellbeing Package is providing access to mental health supports from GPs and other allied health professionals at no cost to students or their families. If you will indulge me, Mr Deputy Speaker, I want to acknowledge the great work of the staff and students from the Barrett Adolescent Centre School who visited us here just yesterday. Having worked in that school for students who are disengaged due to mental ill health, I know how valuable the wellbeing package is. Tragically though, historically the LNP have been blind when it comes to mental health so perhaps that is why this great initiative skipped their attention.

The estimates hearing outlined so many plans that there are too many to include within the time limit of this speech. However, I will list a few more for the benefit of those opposite. Let us start with investment in school infrastructure including two new schools, new playgrounds and tuckshops, GPs in schools and the \$288 million Youth Engagement Program. We have all heard of the Go for Gold program to provide the infrastructure needed to nurture the sporting champions of tomorrow—champions such as the Glenala State High School netballers from my electorate who, over the weekend, took home three first-place trophies and who, thanks to \$4.34 million in funding, will now see new sports facilities built to be used not just by the students but also by the broader community. But wait, there's more!

In the hearing evidence was provided of cost-of-living assistance available through measures such as the textbook and resource allowance and free and subsidised digital devices for learning. We heard about the \$10.7 million in funding available directly to state schools for the delivery of healthy

food and drink to students at school. The free kindy program is saving families approximately \$4,600 per child annually and giving them the best start to their education. It is a program that my constituents are very thankful for. Issues that are important to constituents in my community are directly addressed by initiatives heard about in estimates such as the commitment to hire 2,000 specialist staff to provide wraparound support for students with disabilities.

Hiring public servants rather than sacking them might be a novel idea for the opposition but not for the Miles Labor government. Ours is a government of jobs, such as the nursing and construction jobs we heard about thanks to free TAFE. Again, that plan is foreign to those who sit opposite because they absolutely gutted TAFEs. The Leader of the Opposition has his own troubling track record when it comes to training organisations. The LNP asked many questions about third-party providers of TAFE training. I can tell members who was not one: SET Solutions. Those TAFE courses are not just for the young; we are reskilling people of all ages. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition would benefit from a Certificate III in Business Administration to learn that it is unlawful to trade whilst insolvent.

Over the course of estimates it was made very clear that the Miles Labor government has a strong plan and that the Miles Labor government is doing what matters for Queensland, unlike those opposite who have no plans at all. I commend the report to the House.