




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee, Report

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (8.30 pm): I rise tonight to make a short contribution to the debate on the Education, Tourism and Small Business Committee and the Appropriation Bill 2015. Firstly, I would like to thank the committee staff: Sue, Melissa, Lynette and Julie. I thank my fellow committee members as well as the chair, Mr Scott Stewart—I must say that my accountant's name is Stewart Scott, and I am happy I got it right—and the deputy chair. The committee process is certainly a key cornerstone in the parliamentary make-up in Queensland and it is something that we all must take very seriously as it is a very precious part of the debates in this state.

From the outset I can certainly say that I was very disappointed that the answers to the questions on notice were received to my email address at 4.28 pm on 24 August. This was about a 6½-hour delay which, I must say, can only be classed as pretty poor form. Furthermore, I found it interesting that the Premier decided to take a vacation whilst estimates hearings were being conducted. When it comes to estimates it is the most important part of the calendar year for a government. That is almost unforgiveable. Small business—

Mrs MILLER: I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to the absence of the Premier in relation to committee proceedings. My understanding is that that is against the protocol of this House and I would ask you to rule on that.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! A point of order has been taken. Can the member please withdraw those comments—

Mr BOOTHMAN: I will withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:—and please be careful not to mention the absence of members.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, as I understand it, the member referred to the absence of the Premier during the estimates time period, not her attendance at a particular estimates committee hearing. You have accepted that point of order and I would ask you to clarify. This was not a reference to a particular committee, and you have accepted a point of order that it was.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I understand the point; it is technical. However, the convention is that we do not refer to people's absences in the committees. That is the direction that I have received.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Small business is a crucial cornerstone of the Queensland economy. This government has shown very little respect for our 400,000 small businesses. As highlighted by the member for Clayfield, the Sensis small business report shows that net confidence in Queensland is at its lowest in the nation. Support for this government's policy amongst small businesses in our community is negative 22 per cent compared to the previous government, which was plus 16 per cent in December 2014.

Estimates also highlighted that this government has no vision for cutting red tape as they cannot set a benchmark. It seems that this government is committed to a whole lot of spin and has displayed little confidence in helping small businesses, something I hear loud and clear in my electorate. When I go to my business breakfasts and when I doorknock my local businesses, the message is loud and clear: this government is just making it up as it goes. The previous LNP government supported our small businesses. They set targets to cut red tape and businesses responded with soaring business approval ratings.

Over the last couple of years education in my electorate has thrived and it has thrived throughout Queensland. Schools like Norfolk Village have received their best NAPLAN results in the history of their schools. The Great Results Guarantee has empowered our education leaders, our teachers and our principals to direct funding where it is most needed. Each school community is different and they may require specialist direct funding to improve results. It certainly is heartwarming to see the results of the vision of the previous education minister, John-Paul Langbroek, for empowering our Queensland school education system. I have received many comments from parents excited about their children's new-found abilities at school, empowering them to undertake reading, writing and arithmetic.

Tourism is a key sector of the Albert local economy. I would like to support my local Gold Coast colleagues with the vehement opposition to the winding back of legislation that targets criminal organisations. These lawless individuals have previously tarnished the reputation of the Gold Coast—

Mr Rickuss: And the Gem Hotel.

Mr BOOTHMAN: And the Gem Hotel. Where is the Gem Hotel?

Mr RICKUSS: On the way to Woongoolba.

Mr BOOTHMAN: That is in the electorate of Coomera. The reputation of business and tourism is everything. This leads to my final comments about the scaremongering campaign regarding the Great Barrier Reef. I would like to highlight an article from the *Courier-Mail* on 10 July this year. It states—

Tourism Australia is developing the campaign as research shows the number of potential tourists googling the Reef has dropped 10 per cent in the past year.

Scaremongering campaigns like that from Greenpeace have done enormous damage to the reputation of the Reef, say tourism operators.

I would like to thank the shadow ministers for holding this government to account and for highlighting that this government has no vision—no vision for the future.

(Time expired)