



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

BILLS

Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2012-2013

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Wednesday, 30 May 2012

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Questioner
Speaker Neumann, Shayne, MP

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Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (11:49): Minister Crean, thank you very much for the \$2 million in funding for the Somerset Civic Centre, a \$4.5 million project. The area was ravaged by the floods, and the council administration block was destroyed when the waters of Redbank Creek went through. The funding is much needed. The project will create jobs in the area, and the centre will create a home for the local arts community.

I have two universities in my electorate, the University of Queensland Ipswich campus and the University of Southern Queensland Springfield campus. Last parliament I had the University of Queensland Ipswich campus and its Gatton veterinary science and agricultural centre. I am pleased that we have provided about \$48.9 million in federal government funding for the University of Southern Queensland, which recently purchased its campus from the Springfield Land Corporation as part of a total injection of about \$100 million for the USQ.

Why is that so important? Because children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds in the Ipswich and West Moreton region, the western corridor, can go to university, many for the first time. I am struck when I go to graduations, by how many children and young people have told me they have never gone to university and that members of their families have never gone to university. I appreciate that funding, which will make a big difference. Partnering with Bremer TAFE will be the Queensland Tertiary Education Participation network which will be very important for my region as it continues to grow and develop.

One of the good things about the funding we have provided is the construction of the education gateways building on the campus. It means that we will have a new digitally connected learning environment, stimulating learning laboratory spaces and new offerings in allied health, nursing, engineering and construction.

In the previous parliament, my electorate received funding under the Education Investment Fund that made a big difference. I lobbied very hard to get \$47.2 million from the fund for the University of Queensland Gatton campus.

Opposition members interjecting—

Mr NEUMANN: It was part of a \$71 million fund made up of a contribution from the government to which alumni and other donors contributed. There are dozens and dozens of people in Ipswich who go to that campus, which is a vital boost for the Lockyer Valley and the whole region. Eighty per cent of the students who go to the University of Queensland Gatton campus School of Veterinary Science are females. We have provided further education funding to the University of Queensland Gatton campus sports complex. This is one of the fastest-growing areas in South-East Queensland. I am very keen to see further funding put in—

Dr Stone: On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker Livermore, in this in-committee stage of the appropriation bills, I understood that remarks should be addressed to the portfolio in question. This one is about regional Australia.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms K Livermore): The member for Murray has made her point. The member for Blair will come to his question of the minister.

Mr NEUMANN: I am asking questions about university education in the regions, which is particularly relevant. If the member for Murray ever came to my electorate she would see there is lots of agricultural land in my electorate. We do not live in Sydney or Melbourne or Brisbane. Tertiary education funding for TAFEs and universities is particularly relevant to my seat. I am looking forward to lobbying the minister for funding for the regions, such as tertiary funding for Ipswich, the Lockyer Valley, the Brisbane Valley and the whole of South-East Queensland. Minister, what have we done and what do we intend to do to assist young people and mature-age students in regional areas in South-East Queensland and beyond in terms of funding from your portfolio?