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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

SPEECH

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Tuesday, 21 June 2011 Page 6 Questioner Speaker Mr SIDEBOTTOM</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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(Braddon) (NaN.NaN pm)

Driving all this—

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (12:33): I wonder whether the member for Sturt would like to table his essay. I would be more than happy to have a look at it in a very unbiased fashion. Being an ex-chalkie, I am sure I would find it very interesting but probably would concur with a marker that it was probably only worth 30 per cent. Anyway, I would love to have a look at it.

the new economy—

will be a spectacular boom in technologies ranging from clean technology to digital mapping to online collaboration. Traditional physical and geographical boundaries will mean nothing in a world where everything and everyone is online. Industry will increasingly realise value from services rather than resource-intensive products and new business leaders will emerge to challenge the status quo.

It is always a pleasure to talk on education in this place and particularly to support education reform by this government. Since 2007 it has had a tremendous record of investment and genuine reform, of bringing the higher education system and supporting it well into the 21st century. The Higher Education Support Amendment (Demand Driven Funding System and Other Measures) Bill 2011—for those who might have forgotten, listening to the member for Sturt for the majority of his speech—is about increasing flexibility for higher education institutions. The bill is fundamental to the Australian government's reforms to ensure that all Australians have the opportunity to gain a university education and, I might add, complements the newly legislated student support scheme, which has already seen many more students continue on to university than would have occurred, and indeed did occur, in the past. This is a vital education and economic reform.

And, indeed, they are. It goes on to say:

The way we organise the institutions which make up our society will also be transformed, none more so of course than our universities and institutions of higher education. The increasing competition for natural resources will pressure us to account for every tonne of carbon, joule of energy and litre of water. Things that until now have been valueless will acquire price tags, from carbon, to water, to biodiversity.

I conclude with this final comment:

In this next wave of innovation resource scarcity and massive inefficiencies will be the big market opportunities. Waste will be the source of this opportunity and nature will be our source of inspiration and competitive advantage.

We are moving towards a knowledge economy where the new jobs of the future will increasingly require higher levels of education. Indeed, when combined with the world-leading National Broadband Network, these new economy jobs will have no boundaries. Workers will be able to live in a city or region and work for local, national or global firms on local, national or global projects. The workplace will increasingly be more global with competition fundamentally based on brains rather than brawn.

That is in part the type of world that we inhabit now and will increasingly inhabit in the future. These reforms go some way to bring our people to developing the skills, the mindset and the competencies that are required for this new world.

I would like to share with you a new text that I have come across. It is called *The Sixth Wave: how to succeed in a resource-limited world* by James Bradfield Moody and Bianca Nogrady. It is by Vintage Books and was published in 2010. It talks about the new world, the new economy and the new age and it is relevant to this legislation because this legislation is all about preparing people to support themselves, their families and communities in this new economy. It says:

Higher education is a major key to our future economic prosperity and the sector needs reform to allow greater opportunity and choice for students and greater flexibility for universities to determine their own direction and priorities. The bill does this because, for the first time in our history, public universities will be funded for student places based on student demand. The decades-old system of central planning, where every year universities had to negotiate with Canberra for student places, will be gone and should be gone. Universities will be able to grow with confidence and diversify or specialise in response to their student needs.

The Gillard government's higher education reforms have already given many more Australians than ever before the opportunity to get a university education. Since 2007 we have seen an extra 80,000 undergraduate students go to university and a doubling of Commonwealth supported postgraduate places of up to 33,000 a year. By 2012, the government will have increased higher education expenditure on teaching and learning by 30 per cent in real terms since 2007.

Regional universities like my own in Tasmania are now growing strongly after years of neglect under the Howard government. Enrolments at regional campuses have increased by 10,300 undergraduate students since 2007 and this number is set to grow further. This is also the case in particular in my electorate of Braddon on the north-west coast of Tasmania with enrolments and offerings at the University of Tasmania's Cradle Coast campus in Burnie increasing steadily. For those who are not familiar, Tasmania has one university with three campuses in Hobart, Launceston and Burnie.

For years before 2007, student numbers at Burnie were stuck at around 600. Under Labor we have seen rapid growth in student numbers. At the start of this year we had 890 students and are expecting there to be about 1,000 students for the second semester this year. For a small regional economy like mine this is a huge change and a testament to the campuses' pioneers and the current administration.

I want to talk more about the Cradle Coast campus in the area where I live because I think it highlights some of the key points in the reforms that the Gillard government is making. The Cradle Coast campus was established because Braddon has historically had—and continues to have unfortunately—very low post-year 10 education attainment scores. There was not a widespread tradition of higher education in my electorate. That is improving but it is still not good enough. The University of Tasmania Cradle Coast campus is changing this in a very real and significant way.

The campus offers full bachelor degrees of regional resource management, early childhood and primary education, a Bachelor of Business, a Graduate Certificate in Business, a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Social Work and also natural environment and wilderness studies. I am very glad to add that on 13 July the minister for higher education will be opening the Regional Universities of Australia Conference on the campus at Burnie. They have done very well to get that regional campus conference.

The campus also offers postgraduate degrees—a Master of Teaching; a Master of Social Work—and has many PhD candidates, especially in agricultural

science and allied industries. I now employ one of those doctorate graduates. It also offers first year courses only for Bachelors of Law, Science, Economics, Social Science, Social Science (Police Studies) and Behavioural Science, along with the University Preparation Program. For a small regional campus it is doing a sterling job and increasing its offering to students, but the offerings that it is making to its students are locally contexted and locally driven. That is the key to success and, indeed, that will be the key to success for all our regional campuses throughout Australia.

As a result of these offerings we are now reaching out to those who never saw themselves going to university. Many of these students are classified as mature aged and could be mothers with school-age children, tradespeople and working women looking to upgrade their skills or workers looking to change careers completely. These students are very well serviced and encouraged, irrespective of their previous education attainment, due to the very successful University Preparation Program, which takes into account the local context of its learners and is tailored accordingly.

Importantly, the Cradle Coast campus is keeping more young people in our region. Heavens above, that is one of the key necessary resources to continue to nurture and motivate our regions and our communities. Young people in the past in my area would have had to move to Launceston, Hobart or the mainland to get a higher education. I do not think we can underestimate the impact that this outmigration has had on regional communities. For too long those with get up and go got up and left. The regional campus in my neck of the woods is doing its bit to retain our present and future human capital.

The reforms I am supporting today will now allow regional campuses like the Cradle Coast campus to tap into demand and increase enrolments by specialising to meet community and business demands. For a regional campus to work, we need to understand the region and listen to the region rather than impose centralist policies, administrative structures and capped funding of places. This legislation goes a long way to tackling those impediments. We are already seeing greater links being developed between the university and primary schools, high schools, colleges and the Skills Institute. There are also greater connections to business in the region. These connections are resulting in new offerings at the campus being developed. Most specifically, local small to medium manufacturing businesses need workers with engineering qualifications, so the Cradle Coast campus is responding. This reform we are proposing will mean that the university will not have to ration

engineering places between its campuses but rather will meet the demands that are out there.

We know that a university education—and higher education, for that matter—is a means to a greater career choice and to highly skilled and highly paid jobs. In the case of my electorate, this is also a regional development issue. Indeed, at its heart it is a regional development issue. Braddon needs higher education to operate in the new economy, not just to survive but to operate and grow. We have seen a transition in our economy with the closure of two paper mills, the Tascot Templeton carpet factory and the McCain vegetable factory. We need the flexibility that these reforms offer.

Nationwide, by 2025, Australia will be in a position to reach the national target of 40 per cent of all 25- to 34-year-olds holding a qualification at bachelor's degree level or above. By that I do not just mean an aggregate nationwide; I want those figures to be as real in my electorate, in Braddon, as in any other part of the country, and there is no reason why they cannot or should not be. Indeed, it is an imperative.

The major reform we are discussing here has been accompanied by reforms to student income support. This has provided thousands more students with additional support to attend university. Again, this is vital for a region like Braddon with low socioeconomic indicators. Indeed, the very heart of the student support legislation was to assist people in places just like my own. They have taken up that challenge and their families are grateful for it. That is something that should be recognised by this whole parliament, not just narrowing in on inner and outer regional arguments, even though there is merit in that.

The Gillard government's landmark reforms to the student income support system have resulted in more rural and regional students receiving income support to attend university. The latest analysis confirms that the Gillard government's reforms are delivering more support than ever before to help regional students like those in my electorate go to university. As a result of our reforms, more country students are receiving more money to either study at regional universities or, if need be, to live away from home while studying in our cities. In my electorate, 749 students have benefited from changes to the parental income test, 699 students have received at least one payment of the student start-up scholarship and 239 students have received a relocation scholarship to date.