



Speech by

BILL FELDMAN

MEMBER FOR CABOOLTURE

Hansard 16 September 1998

WAMURAN STATE SCHOOL

Mr FELDMAN (Caboolture—ONP) (Leader of the One Nation Party) (9.37 p.m.): Tonight I wish to draw the attention of the House to the deplorable situation at the Wamuran State School. Wamuran is a nice little country town just outside Caboolture on the D'Aguilar Highway leading to Woodford. The school is located in the middle of the town, right on the highway. The town is famous for its pineapples, bananas and fruit and vegetable crops. However, education is very important to the region, and that is why I wish to raise this matter tonight for the information of the Minister.

The school is located on a property which is insufficient for the needs of that school. For some time the school authorities have told the local parents that the school was going to be relocated to a more suitable location, where sufficient land would be available for the development that that school needs. At the moment it is on a 2.5 hectare location. It has pretty ratty facilities, with portable and demountable accommodation and only one permanent building located on that block—the original building for the school.

Now, after years of being told that the location was temporary and that the school would be relocated to a more reasonable site, the parents have been shocked to learn that this may no longer be the case, that the present location may now be considered permanent. I will tell members some of the problems about this site, which may be the permanent location. After weighing up these problems, surely reasonable and rational people will conclude that the original site is not the rational way to go. This decision is being based purely on rational economic thought alone, without any consideration of all of the social consequences.

Members should consider some of the shortcomings of the location. The building size is too small to accommodate a modern school and the rising numbers of students—now some 350. There is a depressing lack of wet areas. There is no plumbing to the modular buildings that have been provided, which must give rise to accusations of Third World standards. There are definitely no covered walkways, despite the fact that the department is continually warning children about the dangers of skin cancer and the risk presented by the hot sun in summer.

A total of 77% of all classes are held in temporary buildings. The buildings and site are estimated as unsuitable for advanced technology and future planning. There are very real difficulties in placing optical fibre cabling to these modular buildings, and this immediately puts the school way behind other schools in the area of learning. These are just some of the acknowledged problems facing the buildings.

The problems facing the site itself are massive and shocking and must be resolved without delay. Few schools are confronted with a major traffic problem within yards of the buildings. Huge road tractors, quarry trucks and petrol tankers roar past the school all day long. Teachers find themselves drowned out by the noise. Teaching is suspended for a short time because students just cannot hear what is being said. Road noise is not conducive to good learning. Students just cannot hear what the teachers are saying.

This is also an unsafe site. There is potential for serious accidents, for real disaster. What would the department think if one of these large trucks actually missed the bend and ran into the school ground? There would be only one agency to blame—the department, which has dragged its feet in providing reasonable accommodation and safety for this school. There are road safety factors.

There are grave workplace health and safety issues. There is also insufficient space to play sport, especially for the juniors at the school. Indeed, the oval can accommodate only a 200-yard running circle. All areas of the school are steeply sloped and have dirt that is eroding. This in an area where there is a lot of land available nearby. This split site, this mountain site, is just not the place to go. Land has been made available. A site for the relocation was gazetted in 1993. There is just no excuse now for this school not being relocated to that site.

The community in general must be assured that this Government really cares about its people and is prepared to act quickly on the long, unresolved grievances of the Wamuran community. Above all, the lives and the physical health of those concerned must come first.

I do not think I have seen a worse situation of long-term Government bungling and incompetence as there is here. These children deserve the best accommodation they can get, and I urge the Minister to move quickly to address and resolve this shocking problem facing the Wamuran community. These children deserve that school.

Time expired.
