



Speech by

**Hon. D. WELLS**

**MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA**

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Hansard 26 August 1998

### **SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT**

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (6.50 p.m.): The Government opposes the motion and supports the amendment. When the honourable member for Merrimac stands in this House, what we see is the ghost of Leading Schools. This spectre walks the halls of Parliament chanting the mantra of \$56m, \$56m. How was he going to get that \$56m? He was going to be dipping his gory hand into the lunch boxes and the tidy boxes of the disadvantaged schools. That is where he was going to take the money from, and that is why he wants to preserve, for the foreseeable future, the terms of the enterprise bargaining agreement which gave the money to the Leading Schools.

What the member wants to do in his motion is to protect the interests of students, teachers and schools by honouring the guarantees of school-based management in the Department of Education's current enterprise bargaining agreement. What does that mean? He wants the level of school-based management contained in the enterprise bargaining agreement to remain—to be set in stone. What then is the purpose of listening to the people of Queensland? What is the purpose of hearing what people are saying? At the moment this Government is conducting an extensive consultation process right across Queensland in all 36 districts of the Education Department. We are listening to what school communities are saying to us about what level of school-based management they want. We are asking them, "What do you want to manage in your own schools?" and we are saying, "To the best of our ability we will give you what you tell us you want."

What does the motion moved by the honourable member for Merrimac prevent? It prevents us from giving the people what they say they want. What he wants to do is, in his own ghostly way, lock in the past. He wants the enterprise bargain of the past to haunt the future, unaffected and untrammelled by any of the recommendations that might be made to us by the people themselves—by the schools. I notice that one or two members at the back of the Chamber are having a close look at what the motion says. I ask them to read it very closely, because that is exactly what it does: it prevents the Government from giving effect to the will of the people—the people whom we are all supposed to be representing.

With respect to the honourable member's \$56m—the ghostly mantra with which he constantly haunts us—there is no \$56m. The honourable member says that he was going to get that \$56m by saving on the school cleaners. Where have we heard this before? The ghost of Christmas past comes back to us and tells us about what he was going to do to the school cleaners. Do members remember those cleaners and how this Parliament saved them by the skin of their teeth? The member wants to use this Parliament—by what he hopes is an advantageous majority—to do them over again. We cannot have that happening. That is one place from which he was going to get the money. The other place from which he was going to get the money was savings from the restructure. There are no savings from the restructure. My preliminary information tells me that it was an expensive restructure. No, the \$56m about which the honourable member talks is totally imaginary.

We can give a binding commitment that the amounts of money specified in the enterprise bargaining agreement will be there. That money will be there. No money to fund Labor's election promises will come from any pot of gold which the member, in his fevered imaginings, thinks might exist. The \$56m about which the member talks was not in his Ministerial Program Statements. It was not in the Government's last Budget. It was not in the Forward Estimates. It does not exist. It is an imaginary amount which has been worked out by the honourable member on the basis that he could,

by remote control, acting like a puppeteer, get a motion passed in this Parliament that would make this Executive do things to the school cleaners' conditions and circumstances that they would never dream of doing themselves. This Parliament should not bind us in an industrial negotiation with the school cleaners or anybody else. As the honourable member for Gladstone pointed out, that would be totally inappropriate.

No, the proposals being put back on this agenda by the honourable member for Merrimac are reversions to the past. They are reversions to an unhallowed past—a time of inequality, a time of inequity—and they are reversions which would require the robbing of children from disadvantaged schools in order that those already entrenched with the privileges which have been described by honourable members on this side of the House should continue to have those privileges.

Time expired.

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