



Speech by

GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (3.48 p.m.): Angry young man, isn't he? Although all portfolios are important, the Education and Industrial Relations and Employment portfolios are probably two of the most important. Therefore, I would like to comment on matters relating to those portfolios.

The Premier has given me the responsibility of looking after multicultural affairs. A couple of weeks ago, I took the opportunity to visit the Milpera Special School at Chelmer. For members' information, I point out that migrants who have decided to make Australia their home but whose children are unable to speak English, or who can speak very little English, have the opportunity of attending the Milpera Special School which is, as I said, a special school earmarked to teach young people English. I commend the work that is being done at that school by the teaching staff and I say to the Education Department that it is a great institution. After about six months or a little longer, the children have a grasp of English as a second language and can move into mainstream high schools. The school does a great deal of good work.

Speaking of English as a second language gives me an opportunity to talk about the LOTE program. I applaud the LOTE program, but teachers that I have spoken to believe that there needs to be some flexibility in this program, particularly in primary schools. Children who are struggling with their own language of English are still required to learn another language. There needs to be some flexibility in the program to allow principals to sign kids off the LOTE program so that they can concentrate on their English and improve their own language. That needs to be addressed.

The Building Better Schools program has been a great success, particularly in my electorate, which has a number of older schools. In fact, this year the Sandgate State School celebrated its 125th year, which gives an indication of how old some of the schools in my electorate are.

Mr Purcell: I've got the oldest school in Brisbane down in Hemmant.

Mr NUTTALL: One hundred and twenty-five years is not a bad track record. When the school celebrated its centenary, they hid a time capsule in the grounds. They went looking for it for the 125th anniversary and they could not find it. They asked former students if they knew where the time capsule was hidden, and they were told about 17 different locations. They checked every one and they still cannot find the time capsule. It is still hidden away somewhere.

Mr Lucas interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: Actually, my stand-up plebiscite was held at that school and I happened to win it, too. I believe that the Building Better Schools program has been a worthwhile project for primary schools and we should look at extending it to secondary schools. In terms of future job creation and improving our schools, the Building Better Schools program should be extended to secondary schools.
