



Speech by

Dr LESLEY CLARK

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Hansard 12 November 1998

SMITHFIELD STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Dr CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (7.08 p.m.): On Wednesday, 28 October arsonists destroyed the Information Technology Centre at the Smithfield State High School. The losses included six technology classrooms, including four full computer labs, one radio broadcasting studio and recording facility and a multimedia production studio. Equipment conservatively valued at \$400,000—including approximately 100 computers, file servers, printers, network cabling, fibre-optic cabling, radio transmitter and associated radio equipment, power-point projector, class sets of texts, software and site licences, computer disks and other stationery items—was lost. The particular tragedy of this fire was the destruction of things that cannot be valued in dollar terms—all of the teaching resources compiled over four years, student assessment materials and all work stored on the network and the backup that was also in the storeroom.

The significance to the school is immense, because Smithfield State High School has developed one of the State's leading information technology and media production programs. In 1998 alone, students from the school won the State competitions in web page design; two students were placed in the top five in the Queensland Transport video competition, one winning the \$4,000 first prize; and the school's web site was only one of four sites in Australia nominated as a national semifinalist in a Financial Review/Telstra national competition.

I personally inspected the fire damage and have made representations to the Minister. I will be working very closely with Education Queensland and the staff to ensure that that centre is completely redeveloped. I congratulate the staff and the students on the way they have worked together to deal with this latest disaster. I also extend thanks to the Cairns community, which rallied behind the school, with some 32 offers of support from other schools, TAFE, university, local businesses and HOT-FM, which actually got the school radio station functioning once again. I would like to see that the work is done and the reconstruction carried out as quickly as possible. Hopefully, we can have the centre operational again for the beginning of the next school year so that that fine work can continue to be carried out.

Time expired.
