



Speech by

Mrs E. CUNNINGHAM

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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GLADSTONE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—IND) (2.07 a.m.): I want to refer tonight to a very special group of people in my electorate, the Gladstone Special School, and the principal, Mr David de Villiers. David runs a school for children and adults with quite a wide variety of disabilities. He runs it in a very compassionate and very professional manner. The school has changed in its focus over the past few years through a widening range of program options and formats maximising social inclusion. Some of those new programs have included dual enrolments, with students from the special school attending the TAFE college, training at the TAFE college and receiving certification. I have been to their alfresco dining functions, and they are excellent. The students do all the cooking, the presentation and the hospitality waiting. Not only do they have an excellent approach, but the work they do is very professional.

People at the school have talked to me on an informal basis—and I have lodged a letter with the Minister for Education—about changing the name of the school from the Gladstone Special School to Rose Park School, to remove what could be regarded as a stigma, if you like, for the special school and to recognise its broader function and the fact that it has a spectacular rose garden—they are developing grounds beautification—and, more importantly, to recognise the diversity of the students whom they train and accommodate there.

Again, I commend that group to this House. They do an excellent job. The P & C is behind this name change. I encourage the Minister's cooperation in achieving that. They do a great job, and they do it with a great deal of compassion and enthusiasm.
