



Speech by

**Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER**

**MEMBER FOR COOK**

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Hansard 18 November 1998

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (6.44 p.m.): I second the amendment moved by the Minister for Education and I do so with a great deal of pleasure. In a couple of weeks' time, I will have been a member of this Parliament for nine years. In nine years I have never had a problem visiting a school in my electorate. I have 75 schools in my electorate. At no stage have I, as the local member, had any difficulty visiting any of those schools, talking to the principals, the teachers and the P & Cs, finding out what the issues are, raising the issues with the Minister at the time, be it a coalition Government or a Labor Government, and raising issues in the Parliament from time to time.

As the Minister has pointed out, it is not just our job but our responsibility to the kids and their parents in our electorate to get out and talk to them. There should be no impediment to members of Parliament visiting their schools. However, there are processes that principals should through when issues arise. There are also protocols in respect of all public servants and public criticism of Government policy and those sorts of things which we would expect to be adhered to.

The real reason we are here tonight—and the member for Toowoomba South and the member for Indooroopilly have given it away—is that members opposite are looking for the opportunity to grandstand in Mulgrave. Of all the issues that they could pick to campaign on in Mulgrave I cannot believe they have picked education. That is because our candidate, Warren Pitt, has been a teacher in far-north Queensland, mainly in Mulgrave, for about 30 years. His reputation across the length and breadth of far-north Queensland for looking out for the interests of kids in schools and for working with parents is second to none. Never mind litanies about public works and the Building Better Schools Program, which was our program, for which the member for Toowoomba South was trying to claim credit; none of that stuff can diminish the contribution that Warren Pitt has made to education in far-north Queensland over decades of commitment—not in just the three years that Naomi Wilson spent as the local member.

I can remember back 20 years ago, when I first started teaching in Gordonvale. I taught alongside Warren Pitt, who was teaching Year 7 at that time. As a young teacher, I was transferred to the Gordonvale State Primary School to teach physical education. I remember that Warren Pitt was organising cricket carnivals for 22 teams from all over Queensland. He was involved in cricket, Rugby League and in all manner of other sports. He gave freely and willingly of his time. He worked hard as a teacher. He was a competent and well respected teacher. He worked hard after school hours to support the kids and to work with the parents, and he got things done.

If members opposite are going to try to campaign on education issues in Mulgrave, we have news for them, and it is all bad: our candidate has the best track record in relation to education, and we will proudly stand up and champion that record and his candidacy in Mulgrave, because we know that when he comes back in here as the member for Mulgrave after 5 December education is one of the things that he will care about most.

The former Minister now has the hide to talk about growing concern about the way in which the Education portfolio is being handled. Who could ever forget that 6,000 school cleaners were going to be tossed onto the scrap heap by the member for Merrimac? Who could forget the petition that 100,000 Queenslanders signed and which took wheelbarrows to bring in here? "Backdoor" Bob was the Minister, yet he would not even go through the front gate of a school. He used to drive around the back

and go through the back entrance so that he could avoid the school cleaners, whom he decided that he was going to throw onto the scrap heap. And he is concerned about the direction of education!

What about enterprise bargaining? The teachers had to go on strike twice and it took 18 months for them to negotiate a conclusion to enterprise bargaining. What about Leading Schools? The former Government directed school principals to ignore democratic ballots in their schools and to sign up their schools to Leading Schools, even though the staff disagreed with it. What about the commercialisation of schools? Undergarments were going to be advertised on billboards outside schools. This Minister thought it was okay to have women in lingerie adorning billboards out the front of our schools. He thought that that was a great idea. What about the Laidley State School and that debacle over which the former Minister presided? What about the Pimpama State School? The former Minister used to drive past it twice a day on his way to and from work, and he would not even turn 100 yards off the side of the road to talk to the parents about their concerns about the Pacific Motorway. The former Minister is a joke.

Time expired.

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