



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 13 April 1999

MURRUMBA DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMUNITIES; MR A. MAMARY

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (7.20 p.m.): I would like to draw the attention of the House to the tremendous commitment of the school communities in the Murrumba district. Recently, some in-service training was undertaken. A distinguished educator from the United States, Mr Al Mamary, came to Queensland to conduct a seminar. That seminar was attended by an unprecedentedly large number of people. Those people came in droves from the Clontarf State High School, which recently was incorrectly referred to in the Courier-Mail, with no basis whatsoever, as a school of shame; the Deception Bay State High School; and the Hercules Road, Clontarf, Deception Bay, Deception Bay North, Moreton Downs and Undurba State Schools. It was not just teachers who turned up. A total of 1,020 people, including every category of staff of the schools in my electorate and in the Murrumba district, attended the seminar.

The commitment to in-service training is long standing. It has been supported by a number of my distinguished and far-sighted predecessors: Mr Braddy, Mr Hamill and Mr Quinn, to mention only two. The 1,020 people who attended the seminar were people who did all sorts of jobs at the schools. That shows a tremendous commitment by those people to education. The seminar was organised by the district director, Mr Ken Avenall, and principals Leigh Callum from the Woody Point State School and Geoff Rose from the Hercules Road State School.

The philosophy that was put forward at that seminar by Mr Mamary is a philosophy of inclusion. His concern is to ensure that all students are able to achieve their maximum potential. What he aims to do, and what he has very largely succeeded in doing in his own jurisdiction, is to allow students to develop at a pace appropriate to themselves. He emphasises the importance of literacy and numeracy. He emphasises the gaining of the essential skills for an effective life. However, he also emphasises the important difference between each student. Each student needs to be taken as an individual. The philosophy as put forward by Mr Al Mamary to the teachers of my electorate and the Murrumba district was taken on board enthusiastically by the local school communities. The vision that he propounded was one which has been taken up by entire school communities and will lead to greater morale within the school communities.

It is time that we did more of this sort of thing—team building within schools. It is time that we put behind us the old divisive notions of Leading Schools and excessive and unhealthy preoccupations with such issues as school-based management. It is time to talk about education itself. It does not really matter whether the philosophy upon which people operate is controversial; what is important is that they should be inspired by that philosophy and proceed down the path of ensuring that we have inclusive education, and inclusive education does not mean education for those suffering from particular difficulties. It is not just special school education. Inclusive education means including in the educational process those with gifts and talents. It means including the little boy or girl who sits in the classroom bored out of their brains wondering why they should bother doing the work that is being put before them. It means including those people who are rebels with a cause, or rebels without a cause, or those people who, for whatever reason, find themselves rejecting the current discipline structure of the school system. It means including those with a particular interest, whether that be drama or language or the arts. It means including everybody in having a sufficiently diverse school system that will enable everybody to be picked up.

That is part of the message that Al Mamary was giving to the teachers of my electorate and the Murrumba district. It was a message that was taken on board enthusiastically. We have to have inclusive education that enables every child to achieve their maximum human potential.
