



Speech by
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MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

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MILPERA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (10.54 p.m.): In October 1998 the Milpera Special School became known as the Milpera State High School. It caters for students from 54 suburbs, with many of these students changing addresses three times during their 26 weeks at Milpera State High. These students are from a non-English speaking background. The school, built in 1984 as a secondary intensive English language and reception centre, has in recent times been handling increasing numbers of refugees and humanitarian students, who require much longer at Milpera than do students with learning difficulties, due to the fact that they do not speak the English language.

The Milpera State High School lacks adequate funding for its literacy programs. Originally, funds were allocated under Literacy Enhancement Special Programs Schools. That has now been disbanded and literacy funds are now allocated on the basis of Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Milpera received funding under Literacy Enhancement Special Programs Schools not only in respect of its English as a second language students but also in respect of those students who lacked prior schooling. Students from diverse backgrounds attend the Milpera State High School.

As I said, these funds are now distributed using ABS data compiled on the basis of postcode districts at a time when the students at the Milpera State High School were not even in Australia. As I said, Milpera's students are recent arrivals from overseas. When young people arrive in this country, they go into Commonwealth hostels and flats and then move to other areas. As I said, sometimes they move three times during their 26 weeks at Milpera. Nearly all of the salaries are paid out of the Commonwealth funding for English as a second language programs, that is, the salaries of teachers at this high school are paid by the Commonwealth Government. The Queensland State Government contributes very little by way of funding. I understand that other States put considerably more into schools operating on a similar basis to Milpera. This is a State school and clearly the State Government should treat it as such. Although it is a State school, it is treated as a Commonwealth facility. However, the State owns the buildings and grounds.

Over the past 18 months I have heard the Premier saying that no-one will leave the primary school system without meeting certain literacy standards. However, most of these students have spent a long time in refugee camps. Children of primary school age are not able to attend this school, because its students must be aged between 12 and 18 years.

Unlike other high schools, Milpera has no formal P & C association. This is due to the trauma experienced by the parents and the short time that children stay at Milpera. The school would appreciate Government assistance with the construction of a small multipurpose hall and performing arts space. State schools get subsidies for such facilities, because the P & Cs are able to match that funding. That is not the case with respect to Milpera.

Community groups associated with the school and also the school would make use of such a space. Moreover, some classrooms need upgrading and some buildings need painting, either as one-offs or as part of the Building Better Schools program. It is embarrassing for the staff to receive visitors from overseas when the building entrances require painting and maintenance. Over 400 people a year visit the school.

The school even has a couple of the old "tinnies", or old-style metal buildings, and it could benefit from an upgrade to new modular style buildings. Even the facilities grant for the year 2000 is less than \$8,000, because the interior of a classroom block that had not been painted for the past 15 years has had to be painted, and those funds have had to be used. A higher proportion of the compulsory-age students do not fit well physically into the small old "tinnie" style demountables—another reason why there needs to be additional funding for Milpera.
