



Speech by

# JULIE ATTWOOD

## MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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Hansard 24 March 1999

### EDUCATION

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.24 p.m.): Today I welcomed the students from the Corinda State School Year 7 classes to Parliament House. I have visited the school a number of times since being elected to the seat of Mount Ommaney and have witnessed the achievements of the students at the school. At the Year 7 graduation class last year, many students were honoured with awards for academic achievement, citizenship, music, sports and with the LOTE award for proficiency in French.

This year the Right Honourable Jim Soorley was invited as guest speaker at a badge presentation morning at the school. Badges were presented to house captains and school councillors. One parent commented to me that the behaviour of their daughter had changed remarkably when she was selected for the school council. She took on the challenging task with vigour and suddenly crossed the threshold to become a responsible, caring young adult keen to take on her role as a leader in the school. To be considered for the position of student councillor, a student must display a leadership ability in a school, a high standard of behaviour and attitude at all times, an interest in and loyalty to the school, and a friendly and helpful manner towards all students, teachers, visitors and community members. These leadership skills will serve them well all of their lives, with some of them becoming leaders in our community.

Jim Soorley spoke about the role of leaders and the importance of a child's learning. He believes that the educated mind will be our most saleable product in the employment market in years to come. I congratulate the principal, Mike Shambrooke; the deputy principal, Mrs Pam Thomson; the dedicated teachers of this fine school; Mr Ken Acworth, president of the P & C; and proud parents who turn out in force at these school events to support their children. The combined effectiveness of the ideas of the parents and the teachers are what contribute to the overall physical, emotional and intellectual development of the child in his or her early years.

To date I have visited all schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate at least once, including the Middle Park State School, the Jamboree Heights State School, the Jindalee State School, the Good News Lutheran School, the Centenary State High School, the Oxley Secondary College, the Corinda State High School, the Corinda State School, St Joseph's, St Aidan's, the Oxley State School, the Mount Ommaney Special School and the Montrose Special School. I speak highly of the standard of education provided in all of these schools. The teachers I have met are highly committed to their task. It is sometimes quite a challenging job, particularly in schools where there is a high number of students with learning disabilities in mainstream classes.

It is quite difficult to manage without the assistance of full-time teacher aides. There seems to be a need for a middle level of schooling between special schools and mainstream classes. There is a certain number of children who need a little more attention than the average but not as much attention as children in special schools. But because of the wide range of learning disabilities, it would be difficult to provide teachers to cater for each individual's special need to advance their learning and development.

There are an inordinate number of teachers living in my electorate—around 600. Prior to the election, I wrote to these teachers advising them about Labor's stand in relation to the Leading Schools program. Many telephoned me stating how glad they were that we had adopted a policy of equity in

schools. Some were concerned that there were, in some schools, a large number of students with learning disabilities and that these students would not have been given a fair go under this program.

Teachers just want to get on with the job that they are trained to do—that of teaching, not management and administration. The amount of change and competitiveness in the education system in the past has caused anxiety and increased stress levels for teachers, who just want to do their job. The Minister for Education has determined that equity in schools should occur and took steps to ensure the removal of the Leading Schools program immediately he came to office. Much relief was felt amongst the teachers in my electorate, and money was made available to all schools based on equity.

There have been many requests from schools and P & C associations to which I have received a prompt response from the Minister's office. These are mainly in relation to maintenance issues and capital works programs that had been shelved by the previous Government. The Honourable Dean Wells was placed in a difficult situation regarding the Montrose Special School closure, but worked towards achieving a satisfactory solution. The Minister is dedicated to the welfare of all teachers, students and their parents in this State and will ensure that children's basic education needs are met.

Time expired.

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