



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education 2010

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House of the 2010 program. In recent years, the proportion of students across the State completing Years 11 and 12 has declined. The decline has been mostly among boys and the bottom ranks of the Year 12 OP results are overwhelmingly dominated by boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

There has been a small but continuing and very highly publicised decline in the proportion of students attending State schools. It is important to the whole community, including those whose children attend private schools, that we retain a strong and comprehensive public school sector capable of educating the talented as well as the challenged, the remote as well as the metropolitan, and the rich as well as the poor.

Literacy outcomes remain unsatisfactory, with all too many students advancing to secondary school without achieving functional literacy. It is clear that State education needs a new direction. We need a system that allows all students a variety of ways in which to develop the knowledge and skills they will need for working and living in the 21st century. The one-size-fits-all approach on which our public school system has traditionally been run is no longer viable.

After working with thousands of educators and community members across the State, we have devised Queensland School Education—2010, a plan to create a positive and constructive future for State education. QSE—2010 will lead us to maximise our human capital by refitting our State education system to meet the needs of all our students. The changes QSE—2010 will bring about will benefit more than half a million young Queenslanders in State schools by the end of the decade, with an extra 2,000 teachers ensuring that every one of those students is part of the Smart State. QSE—2010 will mean greater community access to and use of school resources. Schools will become even more the centre of the social capital of their community. QSE—2010 is the start of a revitalisation of public education in this State.

The initiatives that make up QSE—2010 have two important aims: to increase the proportion of the Queensland population that completes Year 12 and strengthen the coordination of school and post-school options. The facts are clear: students who complete Year 12 or its equivalent have better life chances. They are more likely to find a job than those students who do not complete Year 12. If they find a job and lose it, they will spend less time getting another. They will have less recourse to the health system, fewer of them will get involved with the corrective services system, and more of them will live happy and fulfilling lives.

Increasing the number of people who complete Year 12 will also improve our State's economic performance. It is the key to making Queensland the Smart State and brings with it the promise of jobs and prosperity. The goal is to raise secondary school completion rates from 68% to 88% by 2010. By this time, it will cost up to \$150m each year to achieve this. Education Queensland plans to raise Year 12 completion rates in a number of ways. I will mention some of those ways. Introducing the new basics framework will prepare students for flexible and adaptable life pathways and help them participate in the future economy. Secondary students will have greater vocational, education and training pathways options available to them. These pathways will give them wider curriculum choices and increase practical work-based learning. A great deal of a child's future success in school derives from providing

appropriate, high-quality early education. Education Queensland will be working towards improving outcomes in pre-Year 1 education over the next 10 years.

The success of QSE—2010 will rely heavily on the professionalism of teachers. They will be supported to update and maintain their professional skills through Education Queensland's new learning and development foundation. The Partners for Success program already under way aims to improve education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland. Literacy is a crucial educational goal and raising student literacy standards is a key policy priority for this Government. Professor Allan Luke is heading a comprehensive review of how we teach literacy in Queensland State schools.

The small minority of students who display unacceptable behaviour will have to face up to the consequences of their actions. These few students need new alternative education sites to meet their needs. Five will be opened this year with more to follow. The environment and curriculum of older secondary schools will be rejuvenated as new links are forged with universities, TAFE, business and the community. Schools will be free to differentiate; to specialise in what their location or their students' interests or aptitudes allow them to do well.

No other State has such a far-reaching plan for education as does Queensland. I call on all school communities in our State— teachers, support staff, parents and students—to work with us to achieve the far-sighted commitment that 2010 represents.
