



Speech by

Mr TIM MULHERIN

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Hansard 16 March 2000

TEACHERS

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Government's amendment that this House calls on the Beattie Labor Government to continue to negotiate meaningfully with the Queensland Teachers Union in relation to the current enterprise bargaining negotiations with a view to a just and equitable result. I value the work of teachers and the important role that they play in the education of our children and their standing in the community. Their job is a difficult one, but they carry it out well. Likewise, the Beattie Government values the work of teachers and seeks to involve them in decisions and processes which will impact on their future work.

Take, for example, the 2010 strategy consultation process. The consultative process undertaken in relation to the development of the Queensland State Education 2010 strategy involved more than 700 meetings engaging up to 10,000 stakeholders, many of whom were teachers. The results from the consultation process unequivocally reaffirmed the value of teachers' work. The draft of Queensland State Education 2010 clearly acknowledges that teachers are the cornerstone of a quality State education system. The key factor here is recognising the value of the relationship between students and their teachers and their involvement in the future of schooling and educational delivery.

The Government recognises that teachers are the front-line deliverers of education through their relationship with students, with parents and the community. The central aspect of education—the point at which learning takes place—is undoubtedly the relationship between teachers and their students. Teachers are the front-line professionals that we are all dependent upon to make a difference to the most valuable aspect of our present and future asset base—our children. In recognition of the key role of our teachers in the future of our State, the current pay offer would ensure that Queensland teachers remain amongst the highest paid in Australia. That is why it is important for both parties to negotiate an outcome.

Teaching is a profession and the nature of teachers' work and work practices is evolving in a changed and changing environment. In recognition of the need to maintain the professional status of teachers within the context of a rapidly changing environment, this Government, through Education Queensland, is working to ensure that teachers have the opportunity to maintain their knowledge, skills and competencies to keep their practices contemporary.

As we know, the work of teachers is being profoundly affected by the global and local impact of information and communication technologies. To this end, this Government has initiated and committed to spend \$40m over four years on information technology support in schools and information technology professional development and training for teachers commencing in the current financial year. This initiative will contribute to an improvement in the working conditions of teachers, as well as enhance their skills levels.

The Government remains committed to the reputation and standing of the State education system as the key deliverer of quality education in this State. This Government believes that the reputation and standing of the State education system is dependent upon the professionalism of our teachers. To this end, we will do what is necessary and appropriate to ensure their continued professional growth and standing within the community. The community has a right to expect high standards of teaching and learning within the State education system. The teachers within the State education system have a right to expect due recognition of their work and professionalism.

As I said earlier, I value the work of teachers and the important role that they play in the education of our children and their standing in the community. Teachers have a right to expect due recognition of their work and professionalism. I urge all parties to continue to negotiate for a just, realistic and equitable outcome.
