



Speech by

BONNY BARRY

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

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EDUCATION [QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY] BILL

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (12.41 p.m.): I rise to support the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill. Schools in the electorate of Aspley are amongst the most innovative and progressive schools in this state. Students in the electorate of Aspley have wide-ranging access to further education and employment opportunities. Carseldine QUT is in the electorate and Northpoint TAFE is on the boundary in the electorate of Sandgate. Small and medium businesses are vibrant and active employers of many young people in the local Brisbane north areas. Young people have ready access to most of the major universities, TAFEs and colleges in both Brisbane and the Gold Coast via public transport that is available from the electorate.

Because of this access and opportunity, young people in my electorate have an expectation and, indeed, a right to a choice of flexible and innovative curriculums during their primary and secondary school years—curriculums that ensure improved access to further education and future job opportunities. They also, however, recognise the need to complete grade 12 in this competitive world.

I am pleased to say that the schools in the electorate of Aspley are all forging ahead with their progressive programs designed to ensure that our students have their educational needs met. The students of Craigslea, Aspley and Pine Rivers State High Schools all have available to them excellent vocational education and training opportunities. These schools have all created valuable ties to businesses and industries within the electorate to the benefit of their students. As a result of these links, our students can work at local businesses part time, many of them in trade positions, and also continue to study in year 12. They are then ready to enter our world of work with credit towards their apprenticeships already in place.

I congratulate the students, teachers and staff at the Craigslea, Aspley and Pine Rivers State High Schools on their efforts as well as supportive businesses and industries. I congratulate link schemes such as the Pine Rivers PSISLS—the Pine Shire Industry School Links Scheme—within the electorate because their innovative work ensures that our students who choose vocational employment have their opportunities to work and study in a meaningful, productive way achieved and, most importantly, in a way that will see them gain jobs. Those students seeking careers in trades and industries will be further advantaged by this legislation.

Aspley is also home to two special schools, Pine Rivers Special School and Aspley Special School. Principal Monica Hole of Pine Rivers Special School and John Enchelmair of Aspley Special School lead a team of staff, teachers and parents who are committed to the creation of every possible opportunity for their students to gain future employment. Pine Rivers Special School has this incredibly functional coffee shop that gives their students experience in work, hospitality and customer service. I can tell honourable members from experience that they make an excellent cappuccino, too. In addition, they work closely with local businesses to provide the students of Pine Rivers Special School with ongoing work experience, ultimately in the hope that they will feel that they have the same opportunities that their peers have, that is, to get a job.

In particular, I really want to mention Bev Burr. She is the proprietor of the Village Craft Club in Strathpine. Every single year of the last eight years Bev has provided an opportunity for a Pine Rivers Special School student to work in her craft shop. It is an example of a commitment that is worthy of special mention, even in a community like Pine Rivers. I am sure that the member for Kurwongbah, with

whom I work closely, would know that Pine Rivers is a community that is inclusive and committed to providing opportunities for its youth.

Aspley Special School is a school of equal commitment and innovation. I recently opened a fully functional and operational kitchen at the school. It has access for students with wheelchairs and has been built to meet professional catering standards. That school will be the hub for hospitality training for many Brisbane schools and a leader, once again, in achieving fulsome employment opportunities for our youth.

Aspley Special School is home to the Kingfisher Recycling Centre and the site of a recent Breaking the Unemployment Cycle project that employed some 10 long-term unemployed people. It included eight disabled people, some of whom were previously from Aspley Special School, who went to work on revegetating Cabbage Tree Creek. I am delighted to say that every single one of those people went on either to find work or to undertake further study.

Both of these valuable environmentally sensitive projects provided at Aspley Special School provide real job training for the students and a chance for them to grow in confidence and skills, meaning they can go on to achieve gainful employment. I am very pleased to note that under this legislation one of the nominees of the minister to the Queensland Studies Authority is to have expertise in the provision of special education. That ensures that the voice of special schools such as Pine Rivers Special School and Aspley Special School will continue to be valued and heard. They are voices that have a lot to say on behalf of our very able and unique students of our special schools.

The Aspley electorate is also home to five state primary schools: Aspley, Craigslea, Aspley East, Bald Hills and Strathpine State Schools. They are schools that I mention often in the House because of their innovative and excellent approach to education. These schools have links between their local preschools, primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. The primary school students have a program that allows their grade 7 students to access subjects from grade 8 curriculums from local state high schools. These programs allow primary school students to pursue studies at a level challenging to their knowledge base and provide an invaluable experience in secondary school life.

The flexible curriculums of our schools are created to ensure our children have an education that best meets their needs. I have a bit of an experience with this myself. I have four children, three at high school and one at primary school. My own children have taken advantage of the year 7 and 8 programs, with my middle son attending Sandgate State High School for grade 8 science lessons when he was in grade 7 at Bald Hills State School. His love of science skyrocketed, I think mostly because they got to use Bunsen burners at high school. He is in grade 9 at Pine Rivers State High School and he still loves science.

My eldest son is in grade 11 at Pine Rivers State High School and he hopes for a career in that fantastic new information economy. He has now been offered opportunities to work with tutors from the business world in learning to write his very own computer games—something that he thinks is fantastic and I think is fantastic not just from the point of view of his educational opportunities but also because it might save me some money on computer games. It is an excellent opportunity for him and his classmates. They connect with people from the real world in building skills for their future.

Pine Rivers State High School is about to open a \$3 million multimedia technology centre that was built with secondary school renewal money. The students there—and certainly the community—are anticipating its opening because it is going to be world class.

Aspley schools strive for a seamless education. At Aspley East State School, all students, including their very large number of visually impaired students, can flow from primary to high school at Aspley State High School and then on to university at Carseldine QUT. These schools work together in conjunction with the state government, which provides much funding for building works, to enhance students' access to a one-stop shop for their educational needs. This kind of cooperation from schools—from preschool, primary, high school, QUT, TAFE—and businesses is replicated throughout my electorate. I believe that the result is one of the best educational systems in the country. Lifelong learning is the goal and our schools and institutions and their prospective employers in Aspley are setting the pace.

The Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill creates the framework for the fulfilment of the government's commitment to ensure that children have the best possible opportunity to have a prosperous future by seeking also to improve the number of children and young people who complete year 12 or its equivalent. I congratulate the Minister for Education on her work. I congratulate everybody who was involved and I commend the bill to the House.
