



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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EDUCATION [QUEENSLAND STUDIES AUTHORITY] BILL

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.58 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise in strong support of the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill. One of the most obvious facts about grown-ups to a child is that they have forgotten what it is like to be a child. This is a quote by Randell Jarrell from many years ago. I feel that as adults, or grown-ups, it is our obligation to ensure that every child has the right and access to a good education.

Research shows that students completing 12 years of schooling live happier, healthier lives. They earn higher incomes and are statistically less likely to be unemployed, suffer from depression or come in contact with our health and/or correctional systems. A love of learning and/or a commitment to lifelong learning in one form or another has been increasingly pivotal for successful lives and participation as active members of the community. Education for all is a key responsibility of our government. We need to make sure that we smooth the way for all of our students. We need to ensure that we offer the best and most relevant curriculum. We must also ensure that our current structures operate well and that they do not present any impediment to a smooth transition through the various stages of schooling and to life after or beyond school.

An issue we face is how to improve what we do to ensure that curriculum and assessment in Queensland schools leads to qualifications that are relevant to the lives of our students both now and into the future. I sincerely believe that all students, young or old, should have access to an education that will inspire them both for life and in life. Our education institutes provide opportunities for excellence in a compassionate, clean and healthy environment.

We on this side of the House believe that what the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Bill 2001 will do is contribute to higher levels of completion of year 12 or equivalent and, through increased retention, improve the social cohesion and the social and human capital of Queensland. It will provide a supported transition from formal schooling to post-school options. It will provide a statutory arrangement that will allow schooling sectors—independent, state and Catholic—and individual schools to achieve their common and specific objectives to meet the needs of their students. These are a few of the objectives that are entirely consistent and supportive of the Queensland State Education 2010 strategy. They provide levers that will promote the strategy.

The present legislative regime was not completely in step with the need of Queensland to be active and in step with a global economy. This bill will address that problem. With this bill the government has moved to ensure that Queensland has forward looking legislation that complements our Smart State agenda. We also believe that this bill will enable the new authority to advise the minister on, and have responsibility for, syllabus development, assessment, certification and tertiary entrance across diverse P-12 contexts and settings with articulation to post-school destinations.

The bill provides for the new authority to advise the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on relevant vocational and educational matters. The bill specifically contains a provision for the minister responsible for vocational education and training to refer matters to the authority and, in concert with the Minister for Education, to issue written directions to the authority about these matters. The provision to facilitate the involvement of two ministers is welcomed. It sends a clear message that this government is determined to ensure that every possible opportunity is provided to young Queenslanders to complete 12 years of schooling or its equivalent in the training and related sectors. This bill will provide a platform for education to support our Smart State agenda.

The authority will develop and revise documents to support the implementation of approved syllabuses—or syllabi—and preschool guidelines. The authority will develop resources and services for the professional development of teachers to support the implementation of approved preschool guidelines and approved syllabuses in schools—or syllabi, if I am to be corrected. The authority will have an accreditation function which will enable it to accredit syllabi and preschool guidelines developed by entities other than the authority. This will ensure that Queensland students will have access to the best syllabi available—

Mr Lawlor: Or syllabuses.

Mr CUMMINS:—or syllabuses available throughout Australia and the world. Using the accreditation function, the minister may develop a syllabus and apply to the authority to have it accredited. If accredited, the minister may direct state educational institutes to implement it. Similarly, a private school that has developed a syllabus may apply for accreditation by the authority. The authority has a tertiary entrance function and a responsibility to monitor and review recommended changes to tertiary entrance requirements to institutions within the state. It also has a responsibility to inform the public about procedures and requirements. This is legislation for the future. This is Smart State legislation. This is legislation that facilitates seamless education from P through to 12 and throughout to post-school study, training and job placement.

When we speak of education, members must realise that we must also mention school based apprenticeships and traineeships. On last year's figures, there were 19 school based apprentices and trainees in training in the Kawana electorate. The Department of Employment and Training has committed to 60 per cent growth in school based apprenticeships and traineeships over the next three years, which will see approximately 10,500 students provided with the opportunity to undertake this form of valuable training. Queensland currently has 55 per cent of all school based apprenticeships and traineeships across Australia. That is something of which this government should be very proud. It ensures that we now have a Smart State agenda with 55 per cent of all school based apprenticeships and traineeships within Australia. In this House this morning we heard how, when last in government, the conservatives had a woeful record on the failure rate of this type of training.

A number of agencies and organisations, including community organisations, new apprenticeship centres, registered training organisations, group training organisations, Centrelink and the Department of Employment and Training task force actively promote the school based apprenticeships and traineeships on the Sunshine Coast and across Queensland.

Within my electorate of Kawana on the Sunshine Coast work has recently commenced on providing classrooms on the top floor and a covered area on the ground floor of a double-storey teaching block for Chancellor State School. Funding totalling \$940,000 was given to the school for four new classrooms. Q-Build expects to finish the project by the end of term 1 this year. This is a strong investment in a growing school community that is playing its part in the building of the Smart State. Enrolments in that school have gone from zero to 850 students in the first five years of the school, making it one of the fastest growing schools in our district. Students are coming from everywhere to attend Chancellor school. The school is experiencing particularly strong growth in years 6 and 7, which is what the new classrooms will be used for.

Within my electorate of Kawana I have quite an educational node. I find that when the bar is continually raised in education it is a positive as we do have good, healthy competition amongst schools. Chancellor State School was one of just six state winners in Education Queensland's Showcase Awards for Excellence last year. I must mention Lyn Cheetham, the acting principal. Yvanna Jones, the former principal, is now assisting the director-general in Brisbane and, therefore, Minister Anna Bligh in Brisbane's head office. Yvanna is well loved and was well loved at her school. If ever they have had enough of her down here we would welcome her back. In saying that, Lyn does a tremendous job.

Ms Bligh: We're very lucky to have her.

Mr CUMMINS: The minister is very lucky to have Yvanna. I hope she does look after her. I saw her recently when her mother was presented with an award here in Parliament House. Mike Anderson is another person who has stepped up from his Sunshine Coast job of district director. He, too, is acting in a higher position in Brisbane. It just goes to show that the Sunshine Coast has many very active and great people within the education industry.

On Wednesday, 19 September 2001 I was lucky to have the minister within my electorate to inspect the facilities we have at Chancellor primary school and the new site of the Chancellor high school, which will be built in coming years. This is a great education node. We also have the Siena primary Catholic school, which opened this year—and I will touch on that in a minute—and the Catholic high school all bordering the University of the Sunshine Coast.

The Immanuel Lutheran College within my electorate is also pleased to be utilising close to half a million dollars for construction of general learning areas, seminar rooms, computer and audiovisual

facilities, storerooms, administrative support facilities, a library, a tiered lecture theatre, amenities and the conversion of existing facilities to general learning and special education areas. Funds of close to half a million dollars are there to assist, including site works, furniture and equipment. These funds will be applied to a range of purposes, including the construction of buildings and other educational facilities, site preparation, water, sewerage, electricity and other utilities, furniture, equipment, architectural and professional fees.

I inspected Immanuel Lutheran College's new site works on 26 January with Adrian Wiles, the very well respected principal of the college; Graham Courtney, chairman of the college council; Ken Down, a well known local architect; Trevor Harch and Pat Evans of Evans Harch Builders; and Councillor Leigh Rowan, the local councillor for Maroochy Shire Council.

Earlier I mentioned Siena Catholic College. I commend Peter Donelan. He recently opened the Siena Catholic primary school. I was lucky to inspect the new primary school on Thursday, 24 January with David Hutton, the executive director of Catholic Education in Queensland. Under the state government capital assistance scheme for non-government schools, Siena Catholic primary school utilised \$259,697 in grant funding for the construction of general learning areas, amenities, walkways, furniture, equipment, site preparation and external services.

All applications for funding under this scheme are assessed according to the educational and financial needs of the school. These allocations are tangible examples of the government's support of non-government schools across Queensland. The Beattie Labor government is committed to providing non-government schools with financial assistance for important capital projects. This partnership between the state government, non-government schools and their local communities is another important step towards creating the Smart State of Queensland.

Recently I attended the Siena school induction ceremony. I place on record my congratulations to Zoe Baker and Matthew Williams, who are the high school captains. They were chosen by their peers. The induction service was attended by Father John Dobson, who also is well respected in the Catholic community on the Sunshine Coast and indeed right across Queensland.

Middle schooling for year 6 at Bokarina State School starts after Easter, as the year 7s are already involved. The age range of the middle school is from 10 to 11 through to 14. It is a marvellous introduction and transition for these kids. Middle school students do many subjects that are a good introduction to secondary school. Bokarina is very thankful to Kawana High School, because it allows interschool interaction through curriculum, teacher exchange, exchange of ideas, meetings, et cetera. Students can undertake manual arts, performing arts, information technology and home economics.

Late last year a star garden was unveiled at Bokarina Primary School. This garden evolved because the school wanted a theme for the Centenary of Federation. They adopted the seven points of the Federation star on our flag. They then added a nautical theme, to add a Sunshine Coast flavour, and turned it into a shade structure which grew and grew. They then incorporated a huge map of Australia—it was the idea of one of the children—which is approximately seven metres in width. They added an indigenous theme by installing boomerang shaped seating and indigenous artwork which was painted up the posts. A Maleny resident created the Centenary of Federation daisy, and the children purchased 250 of these plants, which were in full bloom at the November opening.

The Star Garden, as it is now affectionately known, looks like a ship surrounded by garden and rocks brought in from the Buderim area. Construction was carried out with the help of Work for the Dole participants. A commemorative plaque is on the site. Many of the local people and businesses donated time, materials and money. The garden was embraced as a community project and people who participated in its construction should be commended. The garden is used as an outside learning centre. Dance groups also use it. It has lighting and is a lovely area for evening events. At the opening, many of the P&C members, parents, schoolchildren and teachers dressed in Federation type clothing. It was quite a good day.

Kawana State High School is also within my electorate. I was lucky to attend the student leadership investiture on Monday, 18 February. I commend the Kawana Waters State High School. It takes on students from the Shan Dong province in China. The school captains this year are Aaron Barry and Carla MacArthur and the school presidents are Dean Jones and Melinda Bird. I know the parents of some of these people and the parents of some of the other student leaders. I table a list of the student leaders and student council office-bearers. I know that all parents were extremely proud of their inducted children.

We on this side of the House speak proudly of our ongoing intention to create a Smart State. I mention five schools in the Kawana electorate that received a total of \$64,942 under the state government initiative to buy new computers. Bokarina, Buddina, Buderim Mountain, Chancellor and Mountain Creek state schools each received funding under the program. This was a welcome boost for these local schools. In our rapidly changing world it is important that students keep pace with technology. The much appreciated and deserved grants are part of the government's networked

learning community initiative that is providing \$5 million to approximately 593 primary schools across Queensland in this financial year.

Matthew Flinders Anglican College has come of age on the Sunshine Coast. As the 2002 school year gets under way, this remarkable learning institution is hoping to build on a brilliant record set last year. An amazing eight of its 2001 graduating students—Lana Kelly, Cameron Forsaith, Jacqueline Coote, Melanie Franklin, Jessica Rowley, Sean Hasselback, Tony Downs and Elizabeth Hamwood—achieved an OP1. Six others from Matthew Flinders all received an OP2. Principal Anthony Vincent said that it was the college's best performance in terms of OPs. Matthew Flinders is in its 12th year. It was launched in 1990 with 160 students. It now has 1,176 students. Mr Vincent attributed the latest coup to the work ethic generated at the college. He said—

We have high expectations of students and staff.

High scholastic achievements should be recognised and encouraged. I wish to place on record my admiration for the staff of all learning institutions in my electorate and indeed on the Sunshine Coast. Principals fulfil an extremely important role in our community—shaping, nurturing and guiding. I think it was Winston Churchill who said, 'Headmasters have the powers at their disposal with which prime ministers have never yet been invested.'

Mr Lawlor: Did he go to one of those schools?

Mr CUMMINS: I do not think Sir Winston Churchill did, no. Kawana-Sunshine Coast schools recently competed at a science spectacular. Eight students from the Kawana electorate took part in a hands-on science spectacular for students entering year 10. I was pleased that students from Kawana State High School, Matthew Flinders and Siena College took part in the workshop, as it gave them a valuable insight into a rewarding career in science. The Beattie Labor government is committed to developing programs that foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, and it all begins with events such as this science experience that get down to the grassroots of the industry and encourage students to take up a career in science. I commend the bill to the House.

Time expired.