



Speech by

**Mr D. BRISKEY**

**MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND**

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Hansard 14 May 2002

**FIRE, CLEVELAND STATE SCHOOL**

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (7.18 p.m.): In the early hours of last Saturday morning a devastating fire broke out at Cleveland State School, destroying all the year 7 classrooms and their contents, including brand-new computers, the children's personal belongings and years and years of accumulated teaching resources. I place on record my appreciation to the fire officers who attended for their quick response, the ambulance officers who also attended and the local Cleveland police who attended on Saturday morning as well as the police scientific officers for the many hours they spent there investigating the cause of the fire. Unfortunately, four classrooms were destroyed, and if it were not for the swift action of Education Queensland officers over the weekend the school's year 7s would have had nowhere to go on Monday morning.

Education Queensland, Q-Build, SDS—the government furnishers—and Ausco—the company that provided the buildings—worked tirelessly all weekend to ensure that four temporary and furnished classrooms equipped with electricity were on site by Monday to ensure minimal disruption to classes. I visited the school on a number of times over the weekend, as did many parents and students. Understandably, the school community is very angry at what happened. Cleveland State School has been the unfortunate target of arson on a number of occasions, and it is always the students who suffer through interrupted learning while the resources are replaced and alternative accommodation arrangements arranged.

I also place on record my appreciation of the principal, Sandra Easy, who was at the school on Saturday as I understand from 3.30 a.m., the other school staffers and the many teachers who offered to clean up at the time but who unfortunately were not allowed inside the classrooms until the police finished their investigation. However, I urge parents to await the results of police investigations. These investigations are still ongoing and it is not yet known whether the fire was deliberately lit or not. Similarly, the total cost of damage is also yet to be determined. However, I want the school community to know that the building, curriculum related equipment and resources destroyed in the fire will all be replaced. A rebuilding program will commence as soon as possible.

While the damage caused by the fire was extensive and the rebuilding process will take time, I have been assured by the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, that it will be fast-tracked to ensure minimal inconvenience and disruption to the school and, importantly, to the students. Although considerable resources were lost, we can be grateful that the fire threatened no lives. As members would be aware, fires and the damage that they leave behind can be a particularly stressful time for students, their teachers and parents. For this reason, Education Queensland is providing counselling as needed to students and staff.

Time expired.

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