



Speech by

**Mr P. PURCELL**

**MEMBER FOR BULIMBA**

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Hansard 3 December 2002

**EDUCATION [MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS] BILL**

**Mr PURCELL** (Bulimba—ALP) (6.01 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to speak to the Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2002. This bill will amend 11 acts relating to various areas of the Queensland Education portfolio. In reality, it does not create a new legislative regime but improves on the existing one.

Education is a fundamental part of everyday life and one of the most important influences on the lives of our young people. Anything that can be done to make education more accessible, successful and enjoyable is a plus. I congratulate the minister and her staff, who have worked very hard on this over the years, commencing with the white paper. There will be a mark in the sand from this point on in Education Queensland, which will move ahead in leaps and bounds. The teachers and parents are probably not quite as excited as they will be in future, but excitement is building about the future changes.

I wish to take the opportunity to speak about a few of the schools in my area. Balmoral High School is the only state high school in my electorate. The principal, Noel Humphrys, has two deputies, Allan Kuskie and Gail Bruce. The school offers students the opportunity to undertake school based apprenticeships. Honourable members would know how keen I am to see those continuing. In about a week's time, a number of businesspeople will come together to see how we can continue to make that school the centre for educating students. The theme will be live and work locally. The local businesses will be looking to the schools to supply them with labour. We will be looking to educate those young men and women to make them job ready.

I congratulate the manual arts teacher, Ben Cribb, who has eight carpentry students this year who will get an opportunity when they leave school to go into the building industry as carpenters. This industry is hungry for young entrants. I am sure that the students from Balmoral High will lift the standards of the building industry upon entering it.

As I have mentioned in this House before, I wish to speak about the Arts Academy, Centre for Visual Arts, director Christine Kirkegard and her qualified and dedicated staff. I cannot say enough about this arts academy, which teaches drawings, paintings and photography and offers a degree program in fine arts. It is the best kept secret in Brisbane. As much as I tell people about it, there are still people who do not know about it. I cannot commend it highly enough to anybody who wants to study fine arts at high school. They should attend Balmoral High, because they can obtain a university degree in addition to a high school education. I think there were about 50-odd students there this year.

Also, the Brisbane Regional Youth Orchestra has now moved into the grounds of Balmoral High and, for first the time in its history, has a home. This outstanding orchestra is available for a fee to perform at official functions. The very talented members of the orchestra also perform in smaller groups to provide chamber music for cocktail parties and small official functions. I can highly recommend it for any personal functions that members may have coming up, and I will be pleased to pass on contact details. They are very professional young men and women. These are the people who will be in the Queensland Youth Orchestra in the years to come.

One of the 'highest' schools in my area is the Bulimba State School, which is perched high on Balmoral Hill. Michael Zeuschner is the principal of Bulimba State School. This year it was named Queensland's greenest and healthiest school for 2002. The school outperformed 366 other contenders from throughout Queensland to win the title. The Chief Executive Officer of the Keep Australia Beautiful

Council said that the school was 'buzzing with student initiated and school community activities and had a list of environmentally sustainable activities which was exhausting'. The Bulimba State School thrives on student initiated and school community activities that cover a wide range of issues, including worm farming, gardening, recycling, water and energy use. One of the many ongoing projects at the school is the construction of a toilet block on the lower oval that will use sustainable technology, solar energy and rainwater. Doug Hammond, one of the teachers at Bulimba State School, has been the driving force in seeing this project become a reality. Doug has devoted many hours of personal time to research, investigation and lobbying the government and me on the benefits of this project. To Doug this is a way of life and it is about teaching our young children that a sustainable environment is the way of the future. Doug is a very dedicated teacher who loves to impart his knowledge to the students at Bulimba State School.

Another school in my electorate is Cannon Hill State School. The principal, Chris Ling, has been a breath of fresh air since she has arrived there. She is currently transforming the junior part of the school into a virtual wonderland for children in years 1 to 3. The junior school in Cannon Hill is a very exciting place to be at the moment. It will have water features. They have brought the school out of the classroom and onto lovely verandas built beneath trees. For a young child this will be a great school to be at; it will be an exciting place.

Members may recall that earlier this year I mentioned that Joy Pohlner, a teacher at Cannon Hill State School, was named in October this year as one of the five winners of the Premier's Smart State Teacher Excellence Scholarships. Joy was instrumental in establishing the Primary Art Network at the school. Honourable members may recall last year seeing the art exhibition that Cannon Hill and Greenslopes State School students held in the parliamentary annexe. Walter Vecchio, also from the Cannon Hill State School, was the driving force behind the outstanding exhibition. The students have recently exhibited their art work at the Hands On Art complex at the Boardwalk, South Bank, with resounding success.

As honourable members can see, the teachers we have at these state schools are really doing a magnificent job for our young students and making it an adventure to go to school. The principal of Morningside State School is Pam Singleton. Since she has come to the school it has continued to grow. I thank the minister for coming out last year and spending some time with us at the school. Pam was instrumental in getting another kindy at the school. This has attracted more students. I am pleased to tell the minister that we will probably have to have a building program at the school shortly because the numbers are continuing to grow. We are looking at having a special school because we have the grounds and facilities for it at Morningside.

Pam has also revamped the courts at Morningside State School. The oval is looking spic and span and better than it has ever looked. The pool is used for the district championships. It is a great facility and people come from all over Brisbane to use the pool. The championships were held there last weekend. All in all, it is a very vital school which is going flat out.

I want to mention Camp Hill State School in passing. It is just outside my electorate. A lot of my constituents send their children to Camp Hill State School. Michael Campbell is the principal of the primary school. I affectionately know him as Nipper. I played football with Nipper when I played in the Warwick and District League. I played for Texas and Nipper played for Warwick. We used to love going over and giving Warwick a bit of a touch-up. Warwick Collegians always seemed to win the premiership but we used to keep them honest from time to time. Nipper and I were fortunate enough to be in the Warwick and District side and played together.

Nipper is a great principal. He is always looking at ways to improve the school. The school has continued to grow since Nipper became principal. I congratulate Nipper on the hard work he is doing. He has a unit for 46 special needs children. He is very proud of the way that that unit operates. It is a way of life for the people who work in that unit. They put their whole being into what they can do for those special needs children. I was at the graduation last year and was able to observe how absolutely delighted those children were with the awards they received. They worked hard with their teachers in order to improve their education. It was marvellous to see.

The principal of Murarrie State School is Col Moynihan. This is one of the smaller schools in my area and is one of the two schools in the Bulimba electorate which has a teaching principal. Col is not only the principal of the school; he also teaches. I must say to the minister that it is a very tough job for the principal to be teaching as well as running the school. The school is situated about 15 kilometres east of the Brisbane central business district. There are seven classes at the school, including a large preschool. The school caters for a wide range of abilities and fosters the multicultural aspects of Australia.

In November I attended a multicultural day at the school where the children from Murarrie were encouraged to celebrate the different cultures from all around the world. It is like a small United Nations. The day started with indigenous Australia which featured didgeridoo players and story telling. Scotland and Ireland were then featured with their traditional dances, followed by the cultures of Mexico, El

Salvador, Greece, Fiji, Kenya and Italy. They all featured their traditional food and music. All the children dressed in native costume. All up, it was a fantastic day. I congratulate the teachers, the parents and the school committee for putting on such a marvellous day. We are looking in the future to probably making it a cultural week. The seven small primary schools in my area are looking to get together. I must warn the minister for the Arts, Matt Foley, that we will be looking for some funding for this in the year 2003.

The principal of Norman Park State School is Val Thompson. Her mission statement says it all: 'By working together in a happy, industrious and relaxed school environment, we aim to develop positive attitudes towards lifelong learning and skills with which to meet future challenges.' Since Val has been at the school she has certainly done that. The school has grown enormously. We have had to put a cap on the numbers attending the school so that it will not outgrow the buildings and the facilities. I have to again warn the minister that we will be looking for more buildings there because the school continues to grow.

In 2001 the school started a mini-farm, which I thought was a great idea. This was an initiative of Val Thompson's. It allows students to experience another aspect of education. It focuses on hands-on activities. The farm has hens, ducks, quail, guinea pigs and cockatiels. The children are given a chance to see what animals there are around the place. The students have created a herb nursery. The proceeds from the sale of herbs will maintain the area and help with the expansion of the farm. A rainforest area is being established on the oval and this will provide a home for the ducks and teach the students to recycle the waste as a nutrient rich fertiliser for the oval. The school continues to grow and expand. I wish Val and her teachers all the best.

Probably the largest school in area in my electorate is the Seven Hills State School. The principal is Edward Danielewski. It is like a country school in the city. It is situated on 12 acres of land. The space and natural setting of the school promotes the opportunity for children to be involved in environmental studies. It also allows for integrated sporting activities. Seven Hills school is the host school for all the neighbouring schools for under-8s week. It has an environment which is accommodating and natural and which contributes to the children having self-worth and social development. Leadership skills are taught by the older children in an effort to organise and manage the playtime activities of the younger students.

I have been at the school many times on Anzac Day. The students run the Anzac Day service. I must congratulate them on that. The school has a great ethos.

I cannot finish without mentioning some of the Catholic schools in my electorate. I would like to mention Sts Peter and Paul which has a special place in my heart. It is where I educated all my children. My five children went to that school. John Power is the principal of the school. John, in the true Catholic tradition, is a builder. He is rebuilding the school and he is now in the second stage of rebuilding. It is coming along very well. The school has been transformed. We made do for years and years with buildings that were inadequate, but everybody was quite happy to do that. John has changed the landscape. The school is going to three streams next year with three kindies and a 1-5 or a 1-4—I am not sure. It is probably 1-4 these days. The school continues to grow and prosper.

St Oliver Plunkett School has finished its rebuilding project. The principal of the school is Patricia McMahon. Patricia has ideas to undertake further building, including toilet blocks. She has been a marvellous principal. Patricia has engendered an ethos at the school that is something to see. The school has a very strong swimming club. I will be attending the school's award night later on this evening. The school has one of the largest swimming clubs for a school on the south side of Brisbane.

I recently attended St Thomas's Catholic School for its 75th anniversary. The school principal is David Cashman. He has a vibrant spiritual, academic, cultural and sporting co-educational committee that aspires to provide opportunities for each child to develop their individual gifts and abilities. The school has been in existence for 75 years and I think it will be there for another 75 years with the community that has been built around it.

My time is running out, but I would like to mention the other two high schools in my electorate. At Cannon Hill Anglican College the principal is Greg Wain. He has taken the school from a small co-educational school to a large college that has some of the best music facilities I have ever seen. Elton John could record there because the facilities are so good.

I cannot finish without mentioning Lourdes Hill College. After 11 years as principal of Lourdes Hill College, Kay Herse has made the momentous decision to retire from the school next year. She will be sadly missed not only by the thousands of students that she has educated through the college, including my own three daughters, but also her peers, students and parents. Kay has been a wonderful principal and has set a very high standard for her successor, Narelle Mullens, to follow. Narelle recently got involved with the school and moved into the area. Narelle spent 12 months out of education last year with St Vinnies but she comes with very good credentials. I know that the high standards at Lourdes Hill will continue. I support the bill.