



Speech by

DESLEY SCOTT

MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE

Hansard 27 May 2003

LOGAN CITY SCHOOLS, YOUNG MOTHERS

Mrs DESLEY SCOTT (Woodridge—ALP) (1.45 a.m.): On Thursday, 22 May during Education Week the Hon. Anna Bligh, the Education Minister, attended Woodridge High to launch a new book, *Step by Step, Side by Side* written by Kay Boulden, a collaborative project by Education Queensland and the Association of Women Educators. The book is designed to encourage high schools to become open and welcoming places for young pregnant and parenting women to encourage them to continue with their education. It is no surprise that my electorate of Woodridge was chosen, because both Woodridge and Mabel Park High in my electorate and Marsden and Loganlea High in my neighbour's, Tom Barton's, electorate all have wonderful programs. Kingston College also has some young mothers at its community access school which enables part-time studies either day or night with very dedicated teaching staff. It is a similar story at Centre Education where a number of young mothers have chosen to return to continue their education.

Woodridge High and Mabel Park High have exceptional programs which are flexible, supportive and accepting where young mothers feel cared for and are surrounded by people who really go the second mile to help them in any way possible. Members may have seen the photo in the *Courier-Mail* last week of Thalia Riddle and her young baby, James. She is a delightful young woman from Woodridge High. Principal Helen Jamieson related to us the feeling of reticence expressed by the young men in the class regarding breastfeeding. James is now a very integral part of the year 12s. The wonderful additional benefit of this program is the acceptance by the students and the change in attitude by a whole school community.

Attending the launch were representatives from other schools and a number of young women who had benefited from attending our local schools. There was a real buzz of excitement from our contingent from Mabel Park High, which had won the regional showcase award for excellence the night before. Principal Roslyn Parkes and POWER program coordinator Jackie Grozinger were accompanied by Kym, one of their shining graduates who is now at university. Kym spoke in a very moving way of her experience of being a young mum and then, following the birth of her third child, enrolling at Mabel Park to complete year 12. She is a truly remarkable young woman who was inspired to set her sights on a university degree just six months before completion of year 12, causing her to change to board subjects. Our schools are setting out to change public attitudes and to spread the word to other schools in Queensland that every young person deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential. They deserve our care, our respect and our support.