



Speech by

DON LIVINGSTONE

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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GRANDCHESTER STATE SCHOOL

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.49 p.m.): One of the most satisfying aspects of being a member of parliament is the opportunity to attend functions of significant historical value. My most recent event was the 125th anniversary of Grandchester State School. Grandchester has a unique place in Queensland's history, with the first railway line being built from Ipswich to Grandchester in 1865. The school has every right to be proud of its long history of delivering quality education to the children of Grandchester and the surrounding district.

Plans to establish the first school at Grandchester commenced in 1870, and in 1876 the school was eventually built for the huge sum of 244 pounds, 9 shillings. The school was opened officially on Tuesday, 29 January 1878 by its first head teacher, Mr James W. McDonald, and at that time it had an enrolment of 17 students. Since that time the school has had a very colourful career, with enrolments varying significantly from as few as one or two to its current enrolment of 48.

The school was originally located at the back of the property until it mysteriously burned down in 1916. It was never discovered who was responsible for this fire, but it does seem a very drastic way for someone to get out of doing their homework. The school has seen its fair share of hardships, surviving through the Depression and other difficult periods such as two world wars.

One of the highlight's of the anniversary celebration was the opening of a time capsule that was put down 25 years ago, in 1978. The contents of the capsule had been contained in a concrete pipe and included chalk, rubbers, pencils, coins, newspapers and a cassette tape, which were put out on display. Unfortunately, some of the items were a little damaged, probably due to sealing methods, which were not as sophisticated as they are today. A new PVC time capsule containing a computer disk and samples of school work was carefully sealed and buried to remain for another 25 years until it is opened in 2028. I certainly hope to be there when it is opened.

It had been hoped that the celebration activities would include the school's oldest living student, 91-year-old Effie O'Donahue. Unfortunately, Ms O'Donahue was unable to attend due to ill health so the anniversary cake was cut by Johannah Bennett, who is 86, together with the school's youngest student, Allison Doonan.

Since my re-election in February 2001 I have attended four 125th anniversary celebrations at schools within my electorate and there are more to come over the next 12 months. I think this is a wonderful tribute to the pioneers of this district and a great reflection of the unique cultural heritage that belongs to Ipswich West.