



Speech by

MARGARET KEECH

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard 11 September 2003

UPPER COOMERA STATE COLLEGE

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (7.36 p.m.): 4 September 2003 was a great day for the residents of Albert. It marked the visit by the Premier, Peter Beattie, and the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, to officially open Queensland's newest state school—Upper Coomera State College. The college opened in January this year with classes from preschool to year 8 and now has an enrolment of almost 1,000 students. The construction of the college is evidence to all that the Beattie government listens to the community and responds with appropriate services and infrastructure in fast-growing areas like Upper Coomera.

In 2001 shortly after I was elected I invited Education Minister Anna Bligh to visit the area so she could see first-hand the impact that the enormous population growth in the northern Gold Coast region was placing on locals schools. I was delighted that soon after that visit the minister announced that a new state college was to be built at Upper Coomera. I am proud to inform honourable members that the college has some exciting initiatives such as its Philosopher's Cafe, which is an Internet cafe for students and their parents run on a profit-share basis with the P&C. The college is also the venue for a Gold Coast TAFE adult literacy program, computer training and return-to-work initiatives as well as the Gold Coast Youth Theatre.

As I commented in my speech during the official opening, being a member of a foundation college is a rare and exciting privilege. It is good fun, but it is also extremely hard work. The whole school community is indebted to the dedication and hard work of the teachers, administration and support staff, as well as the P&C. I say thank you also to the college director, Lee Callum, and principals, Keith Warwick and Leanne Nixon, who work incredibly long hours for the students and staff. The day was made particularly special by the magnificent master of ceremonies, year 8 student and school captain, Riaan Underwood. Performances by Ashleigh Rose-Smith and members of the Jabiru dance and choir groups, as well as a moving presentation by Stage B students, Adrian and Jessica, added to make the day a memorable one.

I say thank you to Clarissa and Daniel who helped me in the unveiling of the college's foundation quilt, a masterpiece made by all of the foundation students and teachers. It was designed by year 1 teacher Sue Ogilvie and Lorrie Westerink. In presenting invited guests with beautiful bunches of flowers, Jennifer Powter reflected the pride of all her fellow students. All in all, it was a wonderful day. I thank Premier Peter Beattie and Minister Anna Bligh for their attendance at the official opening of the college and for their commitment to ensuring Albert's students have the very best learning opportunities.