



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Thursday, 2 September 2004

BENOWA STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.45 p.m.): I rise this evening to congratulate the Benowa State High School on their wonderful presentation of the *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Gold Coast Arts Centre on Thursday, 22 July. The performance was outstanding in all respects. The sets, music, staging and lighting were all done very professionally. The actors and behind-the-scenes crew deserve high praise for their talented performances delivered with great enthusiasm. Special praise must go to Meredith Baxter and Jacqui Fry, the producer and director of the show respectively. The finished product was a credit to all of the hard work they would have no doubt contributed in the lead up to the show.

I attended the show with my daughter, Bronte. She and I found one particular graphic on the program very amusing. This was the one with a sign exclaiming 'Trust me, I'm a dentist'. Through my years I have never found that such signs calm the nerves of anyone entering a dental surgery. I am even more loath to try it in my new profession.

I was further impressed by the performance considering the limited space that drama students at the school have to practise in. On a tour of the school, principal Mark Rickard showed me the speech and drama performance rooms. The rooms are small and old and are not suitable for a school of this size, let alone a school with such a keen and successful speech and drama department. They do not have a theatre, but their desire to put on a quality production meant that the school paid out many thousands of dollars to hire out the Gold Coast Art Centre for their performance. The money was not all recouped by the ticket sales.

During the estimates committee hearings the Minister for Education and the Arts spoke at length about the cultural importance of the two portfolios being brought together for the first time. The minister said with reference to the two portfolios, 'There is a lot of synergy and I am looking forward to exploiting it.' The minister expressed the need to encourage arts in the education system as a method of encouraging performers of the future and, at the very least, creating an educated arts-going public.

I say to the minister that this is a very good opportunity to amalgamate the two areas. This school is in desperate need of a new performing or assembly area. Benowa is in the middle of the growth zone of the Gold Coast and the school continues to grow. More importantly, though, performances like the *Little Shop of Horrors* encourage other students at the school to take up speech and drama which means that the subject continues to grow.

I urge the minister to consider their request for new performance space as an avenue to what she has rightly identified as a necessary element of a school's dynamic. Once again, I congratulate the school on a wonderful performance and I would be more than happy to assist them in any way to ensure their speech and drama facilities are appropriate for such a vibrant group of students.