



Speech by
Lesley Clark

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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CAIRNS EDUCATION RENEWAL PROJECT

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (6.04 p.m.): The eight-week community consultation phase of the Cairns Education Renewal Project was completed recently. This project, which focuses on planning for the future of education in the Cairns area from Gordonvale to Palm Cove, has the potential to deliver benefits to thousands of students across the region.

Consultation for this project has been extensive, involving 26 primary and secondary schools in the Cairns region grouped into clusters representing the northern, central and southern areas of Cairns. Each cluster had a community reference group with each school represented by its principal and/or a P&C or school council representative. Each reference group met three times and I participated in the northern cluster meetings.

A number of interested individuals and groups were consulted separately as part of the process by members of the renewal team, including a Kewarra Beach resident who expressed a widespread concern about high-density development occurring on the state government land in Poolwood Road if it were sold. Three newsletters have been produced and distributed to all families at the 26 schools involved and a range of relevant materials was placed on the department's web site as well as in newspaper advertisements.

Of the six initiatives that have been proposed by the community as a result of the consultation process, three are in my electorate and have my strong support and the support of the school communities in Barron River. They are a dedicated middle school for years 6 to 9 at Redlynch to provide an integrated prep to year 9 learning environment; a new senior campus for years 10, 11 and 12 at the Smithfield State High School to be located adjacent to James Cook University, with the existing Smithfield campus reorientated as a middle school for years 6 to 9 and possibly, over time, as a prep to year 9 campus; and the relocation of the Kuranda primary school to a new location adjacent to the Kuranda State High School to provide a prep to year 12 college.

The key element in the Cairns Education Renewal Project involves the identification of surplus Education Queensland assets that could be sold to fund these new initiatives, which might not otherwise be funded. It has been estimated that up to \$10 million can be generated by the sale of surplus government land. There was strong community support for the concept of selling surplus assets to support important new educational projects in Cairns, provided there was a rigorous process to determine whether the land was in fact surplus and that there was a government guarantee that the funds were allocated to the new initiatives. I put on the record here the government's commitment that any funds from the sale of assets will be retained for allocation to education projects that have been supported by the community in Cairns and ultimately receive approval from the Minister for Education.

I take this opportunity to thank all those people who have contributed their time, energy and skills to this consultation process, which has been a first for Queensland. The next stage in the project is the preparation of the report for the Minister for Education summarising the outcomes of the community consultation process. I know that Minister Anna Bligh will take account of all of the views documented in the final community consultation report when making her decisions about the future of state education in the Cairns region.