



Speech by

**Neil Roberts**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

Hansard Thursday, 21 October 2004

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## **ST PIUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (7.17 p.m.): On Wednesday, 20 October I had the pleasure of participating in the blessing and official opening of the new preschool building at St Pius Catholic School at Banyo. St Pius is one of four Catholic primary schools in my electorate which provide first-class educational opportunities for our local children. St Pius was established in March 1947 and has provided nearly 58 years of continuous and dedicated service to the communities of Banyo, Nudgee, Nudgee Beach, Northgate and Virginia. The school is currently led by Principal Terry Grogan and an active Parents and Friends Association led by its president, Joanne Neeland. The dream of constructing a new preschool at St Pius was many years in the making. I particularly want to recognise the efforts of the P&F and many other members of the community for their ongoing support of this project. Special mention goes to Joanne Neeland, Stuart Neeland, Lawrie Blacka, Peter Kelly, Madonna Hoelscher and Jodi Cross for the time and effort they have put into seeing this dream become a reality. Overall, the St Pius school community raised around \$50,000 towards the project, which was undertaken by Boss Constructions of Toowoomba. I am also pleased that the state government was able to contribute \$130,000 and the federal government \$100,000 towards construction costs.

It was significant that the Sisters of Mercy were represented at the blessing and ceremony. Sister Margaret Robertson, provincial leader of the Sisters of Mercy, represented the many sisters who lived in the convent which originally occupied the site on which the new preschool is built.

The upgrades at St Pius are another added bonus for local residents. Our area is blessed with the good fortune of suburban renewal, which is being driven by the upgrading of all our local educational facilities.

Along with the upgrade and new works at Earnshaw State College, Banyo now hosts the Australian Catholic University, which opened its door to students in 2003. ACU completes the educational precinct for the area and significantly increases educational opportunities for local families. Children growing up in the Banyo-Nudgee area can now progress from kindergarten to university all within walking distance of their homes. Educational opportunity is a top priority of the Beattie Labor government, and I am proud of the ways in which my local community is contributing to that endeavour.

In closing, I want to congratulate and thank the St Pius school community once again for their great achievement in establishing the new preschool, which will ultimately enable a smooth transition to the full-time preparatory year to be introduced in 2007. By working in partnership with the state and federal governments we have been able to jointly deliver another first-class education facility to our local community.