



Speech by

Michael Caltabiano

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

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CHATSWORTH ELECTORATE, HIGH SCHOOLS

Mr CALTABIANO (Chatsworth—Lib) (4.57 pm): I rise to speak on the issue of a lack of state high schools in the electorate of Chatsworth. In 1900 the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act provided each Australian state with the responsibility for the provision of education within that state. For 105 years the state of Queensland has been responsible for the education of its children and since 1998 this state has progressively and consistently failed them.

In my electorate the failures of the government in the provision of education services for our high school students is obvious with only one state high school in the entire electorate. Whites Hill State College on the far western border of the Chatsworth electorate services Carina, Carina Heights as well as much of Camp Hill and Mount Gravatt East. For the high school students from Chandler, Gumdale, Belmont, Wakerley and Tingalpa in the east and north of my electorate the closest state high school is either at Balmoral or at Wynnum.

This poses many problems for students getting to school in this area. It is common for those students to have at least one change of bus service between their homes and their schools. Also in the acreage and newly developing areas of Brisbane these bus services are frequently prefaced by parents driving their children to the closest bus stop with public transport in the area being less than adequate.

Not only is the time taken and the distances these students must travel to their schools at Balmoral and Wynnum excessive and entirely unacceptable in suburban Brisbane; a number of students are not eligible for school travel fare discounts. Consequently, parents are forced to pay a premium to send their children to school, and this disadvantages those families already disadvantaged by not having access to a local high school.

The population of the south-eastern suburbs in and around Carindale has grown by approximately 30 per cent over the last 10 years, with Chatsworth being one of the fastest growing electorates in south-east Queensland. With many new residential developments in the area, hundreds of young families are moving there and, despite state primary schools already being at capacity, many children new to the area are still being accepted in these schools. However, the future for the area must be considered as there is currently no local high school for the hundreds of children finishing year 7 at local state schools each year. A state high school in the area would be utilised fully and unquestionably as students from Chandler, Belmont, Gumdale, Wakerley and Tingalpa would be able to go to school locally and not be forced to travel to Balmoral or Wynnum each day for school. This would bring significant benefits to the students and their families by reducing travel time and cost and, most importantly, by attending a local high school servicing their community.

In addition to this, the South East Queensland Regional Plan earmarks this northern and eastern area of the Chatsworth electorate as part of the urban footprint that is ready for growth and change through infill and redevelopment. One of the many failures of the current government is a failure to plan for growth despite encouraging it. As the state member for Chatsworth, I am giving the government a heads-up. The local community that I have the privilege of representing needs another high school now to service current

residents and the many young families with school-age children who are encouraged to move to the local area. As the member for Chatsworth I am committed to ensuring the government hears my constituents. This is one of the major concerns of local residents in the suburbs of Chandler, Gumdale, Belmont, Wakerley and Tingalpa. I will continue to campaign for a local high school in the area for these local families.