



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 29 March 2006

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.22 pm): Earlier this month I was honoured to be invited to open the Nambour St Joseph's Primary School youth parliament. Like our own state parliament, St Joseph's parliament boasts a clerk, a prime minister, a range of committees or portfolios and a shadow ministry. The parliamentary committees reflect the needs of the school community and include the environment, welfare, services, public relations, health and recreation.

The year 7 students who make up this parliament meet regularly and, like our own parliamentarians, share ideas and focus on working together on solving shared problems. All year 7 students are involved in this parliament, with every student joining a committee of interest to participate in. Every year 7 student presented a speech in the lead-up to the formation of the parliament.

Unlike those who contest our state elections, the students wrote an application letter and were interviewed before being placed on a youth parliament committee. Once the committees were formed, each committee voted for their minister and shadow minister. The school principal has the role of governor-general and has the final say on newly introduced bills. The acting governor-general, Cathy Fuller, was in this position during this year's official opening.

Each committee member and shadow member spoke briefly on their future plans and their ideas for activities during the coming year. It was heartening to hear our young leaders of the future speaking about fundraising events that they hoped to organise to help those who are in need in our community and beyond.

When speaking to this group of enthusiastic school leaders, I was able to compare their goals and plans with those of our three levels of government in Australia. A few days after this youth parliament opened, Cyclone Larry devastated entire townships in north Queensland. We have witnessed the three levels of government and people from across Australia working together to aid those who have lost everything. It was reassuring to reflect on the students at St Joseph's and realise that the same sentiments of support and compassion were being expressed by our young leaders of tomorrow.

Congratulations to the families and teachers of the St Joseph's students for making learning about government an active and fun part of the school curriculum and for instilling in our children a genuine concern for helping those in need.