



Speech by

Ted Malone

MEMBER FOR MIRANI

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EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (4.47 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to support the Education Legislation Amendment Bill in the House today. The primary objective of the bill is to facilitate the introduction of the new certificate arrangements and the administration of student's accounts to support the certification arrangements. Certification requires literacy, and literacy is one thing that is dear to my heart. Literacy is one of the important aspects of education, and it enables our children to progress through primary and secondary schooling and on to tertiary education and into traineeships, apprenticeships and ultimately the general workforce.

I am very proud to say there are several excellent and highly successful programs running in schools in the Mirani electorate. The first one I want to speak about is Kickstart to Literacy in Mirani High School which has gained high achievements not only in Queensland but across Australia. It was part of a federally funded lighthouse project, and I have spoken about it many times in the House previously.

I am pleased also to advise the House that next Friday, 8 December, as the patron of the project I will be attending the graduation of the 2006 students and they will have the official opening of the program's new workshop. They have gained funding from the community gaming machines fund and also from community organisations to actually build the shed. There was sponsorship from Caterpillar and Hastings Deering et cetera to fit out the workshop, which is very encouraging. The program has led to a high number of certifications, traineeships and apprenticeships. It is surprising to see the number of successful students come out of that program.

I would also like to place on record my appreciation and special congratulations to the project coordinators. They are Cath Jeffrey, who is the deputy principal of Mirani State High School, Lyn Egan and Yvonne Lee, and the many businesses—I think something like 25 businesses throughout the Mackay district are sponsors for the organisation—community organisations and community members who donate and assist in any way possible in this wonderful project.

The other centre that I want to speak about today is the Sarina skills centre based at the Sarina State High School. It is a community based project run by a committee obviously with great support from the principal and teachers of the Sarina State High School. It is really a true partnership between the community and the school. The actual setting-up of the skills centre has required a huge amount of effort from the community, sponsorship throughout the community and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to put it together.

Through the state government's School Renewal Program there was an acquisition of around 12 acres of land which was ultimately security fenced. A house was also acquired which was on the site and it was stripped to become a teaching centre for the unit. The teaching centre and the rest of the accommodation and reception areas were air-conditioned. The multimedia set-up was put in the teaching area with remote access to a server at the high school. A toilet block was built and included showers and toilets for both male and female students as well as staff and a handicapped toilet and shower was also built. Under any estimation it would probably have cost the department in the vicinity of \$350,000 or \$400,000. However, it was actually built by the community for something like \$50,000 or \$60,000.

I am pleased to advise that the centre is up and running now. A huge shed/workshop has been built on the site and they are accommodating students there this year. It will be bigger and better next year with a full complement of students for every lesson and for every day of school.

As I said, government, community and business partnerships and sponsorship and other involvement by the community continues to grow. Last week I was at the skills centre when the federal member for Dawson, De-Anne Kelly, announced on behalf of Gary Hardgrave, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister and Minister for Vocational and Technical Education, the Australian government funding of \$425,000 from the National Training and Infrastructure Program. That money will enable the skills centre to purchase tools, which includes lathes and welders, vehicles, tractors and equipment for the provision of certificates I and II Rural Operations—certificate III will initially be offered by the Australian Agricultural College, Emerald campus—certificates I and II Engineering, short vocational and technical education courses and Australian school based apprenticeships. That really will make that skill centre a well-rounded project and will place in our community students who will come out of that high school with the ability to walk straight into apprenticeships and other jobs right throughout the community in an area of central Queensland that has such a huge skill shortage that we are bringing people in from overseas to try to meet that skill shortage.

There have been recent sponsorships to the skills centre. I recently picked up from the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal and delivered back to the college ex-fire hoses which will be used for the transfer of water and the irrigation of some of the crops they have there. Another sponsor was the Shardale Droughtmaster Stud. Cass and Graham Westhead have a property out on West Plane Creek Road. Students have been working out there inoculating and testing cattle. The Westheads will be donating cattle for the students to work with at the school and to actually show at the Sarina show in August next year.

Frank Langfield, who works at the skills centre, has his entire goat herd agisted there currently for the students to work with. Marlene Gordon and the Gordon family from Rocky Dam Road have donated a buck for the school stud. Wayne Born, who runs a goat stud in the Sarina area, has been working with the students so that they may be able to show the stud goats at next year's shows. The judges from this year's Sarina show were so impressed with the students and the program at the school that they will be visiting the students early next year to promote and assist with the breeding and showing of goats and poultry at the local show. Currently the students are working with the local Landcare group in respect of some of the wetland area within the complex. This coming weekend Wayne Davis, who is the chairman of the Mackay Rural Producers association, is taking a tour through the centre to promote the interests and involvement with the local rural producers in the area. Of course graziers and farmers are part of that rural producers association.

The Sarina State High School is also running the Motorworks program at a different location. It came about in 2005 when teachers from the Sarina State High School identified a need for an alternative program to help a group of students who were experiencing difficulties and may have been at risk of dropping out of school early. In 2006 they instituted the small motors repair program which they called Motorworks. Embedded in the program is working and learning in an individual and team environment. They take on board work ethics and practices. They acquire the skills of motor trades and small motor repair. They do courses on workplace health and safety practices and procedures. They have to follow supervised instructions. They have to fill out forms, for example, time cards, job cards and order forms for parts et cetera. The great asset in this program is communication skills, such as communicating with other persons who are working on motors, indicating what is wrong with the motor and indicating what is needed to fix it. So it is a real team effort amongst the group. Spatial reasoning and diagram reading are also part of it. Students develop the ability to read an exploded assembly drawing and to identify and correctly describe the components. So far—and this program has been in place for only one year—these young people have grown in confidence. I have visited the school a number of times. I can see the young students growing in self-confidence. They are able to speak in front of guests and sponsors at the program. They improve their communication skills and concentration and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. They are actually tested with specific indicators. They develop hand skills with tools and the ability to select the right tool for the right job and actually take care of the tools as well. They develop environmental awareness in the cleaning of parts, recycling, disposal of oils and contaminated products, and develop a genuine interest to learn in other areas of the curriculum. These students become very motivated as opposed to the students who do not enter the program. I view the program as very realistic and very similar to real life working and learning in an industry.

In the future Sarina State High School will duplicate the program with another eight people entering the program in 2007. They will roll the current year 8 into the year 9 program in 2007, improving their skills and developing the possibility of actually moving into an engine reconditioning phase so that there is a real outcome to their learning. Eventually the school will investigate the purchase of such items as a line borer, which is very specific to engine rebuilding, and synchro valve seating equipment as part of the engine reconditioning program in the higher grades. I would also like to commend the project coordinator, the deputy principal, Ralph Johnson, and the teaching staff, Rolf Muller and Alison Cliffe.

Another program that is running at Sarina State High School is Reading, a Raging Success program. It is a community based literacy intervention program initially targeted at poor readers in year 8 who were either disengaging or at risk of disengaging from mainstream schooling.

The program is fully supported by parents, students, teachers and tutors. The program allows students from years 8 to 12 who wish to improve their literacy and numeracy competency to participate. Their attendance is voluntary from 8.20 am to 8.50 am. It does not interfere with the curriculum timetable. It is based on one-on-one assistance with reading, spelling, comprehension, vocabulary and numeracy. The partnerships with community groups and local businesses is one of the hallmarks of the program. As I said, those in years 8 to 12 have access to the program.

Behaviour and subject specific improvements are very evident. I have actually been with those students on a number of occasions to award certificates et cetera. Parents, teachers, students, tutors and local businesses and the community are all working together to ensure that the project is viable and sustainable in the long term. In actual fact, something like 35 tutors work with students on a one-to-one basis. Most of those are volunteers, community members and mums and dads.

This program was a state finalist in the 2006 Showcase Awards for Excellence in Schools. I commend the project coordinator, Miss Alison Cliffe, and the many dedicated volunteer tutors for the success of this program. With those few words I commend the bill to the House.