



Speech by

Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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SLACKS CREEK STATE SCHOOL; CALVARY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE KINDERGARTEN

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (12.25 pm): Students at the Slacks Creek State School are taking a hands-on approach to wildlife conservation. Koalas at the Moggill Koala Hospital will benefit from a new memorandum of understanding between the Slacks Creek State School and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. This unique partnership has resulted in the planting of 2,500 trees at the Slacks Creek State School, which will provide leaf food for sick, injured and orphaned koalas recovering at the koala hospital.

I was delighted to attend the tree planting ceremony at which over 300 students planted approximately 1,500 mostly eucalyptus trees throughout one hectare of the school. An additional 1,000 trees are to be planted later. I thank them for allowing me the opportunity to join with them and to plant a tree. It was a very powerful sight to see the students, teachers and staff planting the trees at one time.

The QPWS has had trouble collecting and delivering eucalyptus leaves to koala hospital patients, as their food source has been diminishing due to land clearing. The new trees at the Slacks Creek State School will supplement that food loss and provide the recovering koalas with a much needed lifeline. I congratulate the Slacks Creek State School for working with the QPWS to implement the initiative, which is a tangible investment in the local environment and the protection of a native species that is vulnerable to extinction.

The plantation will be managed and maintained by the school, with close guidance and supervision from the QPWS. Using the school's new rainwater tanks and council's recycled water, the fodder plantation provides a great hands-on opportunity for students to engage in environmental studies. As part of their role, QPWS rangers collect and deliver eucalyptus leaves to koala hospital patients. The Slacks Creek State School fodder plantation will enhance the amount of food available to the recovering koalas.

This is the first time that the QPWS has made an agreement with a school under the Koala Fodder Plantation Program, and it has achieved a practical, on-the-ground conservation outcome for our vulnerable koalas. Additionally, the project demonstrates the Queensland government's commitment to the conservation actions outlined in the QPWS's Nature Conservation (Koala) Conservation Plan, which came into effect in early October 2006. I congratulate the Slacks Creek State School for working with the QPWS to implement this tree planting initiative.

I take this opportunity to also congratulate the Slacks Creek State School on two other great initiatives that it has recently implemented, that is, the presentation of two Mem Fox reading books to all prep year students and the Read Aloud Club. It was a great pleasure for me to present all prep year students with the books. The purpose of giving reading books to prep students is to get parents, carers and other family members to read to children and help develop their enjoyment of literature.

The second initiative complements the prep year initiative, and it is the Read Aloud Club. The club is held one day a week in the school library. Parents, carers, families and friends are welcome to come to the

school and join in reading activities with their children. I was fortunate to attend the first day of this great initiative and to see the participation of parents, staff and students in the reading activities. From time to time guest readers will be invited to attend the club, and I am certainly looking forward to my time as a guest reader. It was very rewarding to see the older students participating in the club by reading out loud to younger students.

As someone who loves reading, I am very pleased to see those two initiatives implemented. I hope that they will result in more children enjoying reading and will encourage them to continue reading throughout their lives. I congratulate the principal of the Slacks Creek State School, Mr Mike Sawbridge, on those two great initiatives. At the first sitting of the Read Aloud Club, Mr Sawbridge told parents that reading out loud is a very powerful way to engender a love of reading in young children. He said that it is essential that people read to their children from an early age. I am sure that those two great initiatives by Slacks Creek State School will improve student outcomes in reading.

While talking about early years education, I want to bring to the attention of the House the new C&K kindergarten that has opened at Calvary Christian College's Springwood campus. The kindergarten was established in the college's preschool classrooms after strong parent interest in utilising the preschool buildings to provide educational programs and meet the needs of parents. I had much pleasure in joining the children, parents and staff of the college, C&K representatives and the Mayor of Logan, Councillor Graham Able, at the official opening. The children who attend the C&K sang fabulously to us and assisted the mayor in planting a tree to commemorate that very special day.

The children joined in the cutting of the official cake and I want to thank them for assisting me in cutting the official ribbon to open the centre. This bright, colourful learning area will provide many hours of fun and learning for all those who come through the centre. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the 100 years of the C&K. I have a number of C&Ks in my electorate that provide quality early childhood education and wonderful care to families.

I congratulate Calvary Christian College on this exciting and visionary initiative. Parents tell me that the convenience of having their children attend C&K at the school and then continue on is very important to them. The convenience of having their children go from C&K to grade 7 is something they consider important in their decision on where to send their children to school. I am pleased that the college listened to the parents and proceeded with this partnership. I look forward to the upcoming opening of another C&K which is being established at its Carbrook campus.