



Speech by
Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard Tuesday, 13 November 2007

AMBERLEY STATE SCHOOL

Mr RICKUSS (Lockyer—NPA) (10.11 pm): I want to read into the record a letter from the Hon. Brendan Nelson to the Hon. Rod Welford. The letter states—

I write further to my letter of 17 September 2007 regarding Amberley State School.

I note that you have not responded to that letter in which I asked that you address the number of concerns that the local community has raised about your handling of this matter, the most significant of which is the strong community opposition to your proposed site for the new school at Yamanto.

The minister just will not listen. The letter continues—

On 11 October, I had the pleasure of visiting the Amberley State School and the Amberley Outside School Hours Care Facility and met with students, teachers, parents and members of the Amberley Community.

It was abundantly clear during my visit that there is an overwhelming community preference in favour of relocating the school to Willowbank ...

I am also informed that at a public meeting organised by your Department and held on 20 September a unanimous motion was passed in favour of a site at Willowbank.

As I have previously advised, the Commonwealth remains willing to fully fund a replacement school up to a cost of \$26.8 million. However, given the strong and clear will of the students and parents at Amberley State School, the siting of the new school must be at Willowbank.

It is disappointing that you did not deliver on your previously stated intention of listening to the community. As early as March this year you advised me that your departmental officials had begun consultation with parents.

I request that you give this issue your urgent attention. You can be assured that Defence will continue to work cooperatively with State and local government to ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the Amberley community as quickly as possible.

This is Mr Welford being just as mean and as tricky as usual. This whole state government's attitude is just mean and tricky. It is trying to get a free school at Yamanto for no apparent reason. Everyone in the local area knows that the school should go to Willowbank.

Mr Stevens: Cold and heartless!

Mr RICKUSS: Cold and heartless. I think those opposite must get it from the federal leader, Mr Rudd. That is where they get it from. They are cold and heartless.

Mr Stevens: Runs through their blood.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. I have been to meetings and it was all about listening to the community. The government said, 'We'll listen to the community and see what will happen.' Mr Welford is too occupied looking for car keys. His biggest problem is finding his car keys. He is not worrying about where the school should be placed. He cannot even find his car keys. He keeps losing them. Here we are trying to get an important decision out of him like where a school should be placed when it is fully funded by the federal government and all we get is his panic about his car keys. That is the real problem here—Welford's car keys, not where schools should be placed.

Brendan Nelson is willing to fund this school. The Amberley community wants the school at Willowbank. The Willowbank community wants the school at Willowbank. It is the logical place for the school to go. It has over 200 pupils where it is now and it will still have over 200 pupils. It is not as if it is an unsustainable school. Of the 37 schools in my electorate, more than half are smaller than that and therefore this school should be placed at Willowbank.