



Speech by

**Liz Cunningham**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

Hansard Wednesday, 31 October 2007

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## **PREP YEAR, TEACHER AIDE HOURS**

**Mrs CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (11.49 am): I would like to raise the concerns expressed by representatives of the QTU in my electorate regarding teacher aide hours for the prep year. In a meeting that I had with them recently they expressed grave concerns about the changes in the allocation of hours to prep schools compared to preschools. Currently in the schools about 25 hours are allocated, but in order for adequate hours to be given to the prep year, involving younger children who need closer supervision and closer assistance, some of the aide hours have been taken away from the rest of the school and reallocated to prep. That is to the disadvantage of the rest of the school. Also, some specialist teachers are being used to support the prep classes—again, to get those aide hours up.

Some very practical problems were outlined during that meeting, such as toileting issues. Preschool buildings were built so that toilets and toileting were able to be supervised in an efficient manner. Now, with the prep buildings that have either been built or adapted, young children have to be diverted to another building for toileting. These small children need supervision, and with one teacher often that supervision is not available. The QTU talked about increased trauma to the young children because of the 'accidents' that occur.

Prep year was intended to be based around child centred learning but, because of the added stress on prep school teachers without adequate teacher aides, teachers have had less time available to investigate and base their teaching on child centred learning. They have had to be more regimented and more structured in the delivery of programs, again, just because there are not enough teachers in the room—usually only one—to provide supervision, to provide the program and to provide one-on-one help.

Time expired.