



Speech by

Hon. Rod Welford

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Hansard Tuesday, 16 October 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sustainable Schools

Hon. RJ WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts) (10.08 am): The uptake of sustainable practices across government, industry and the community is increasing. In particular, schools across our state are making significant inroads to becoming environmentally sustainable and contributing towards long-term changes in their local environment, economy and community.

Yesterday I presented the Keep Australia Beautiful Council—Queensland's Greenest and Healthiest School Award to far-north Queensland school Wonga Beach State School. Wondai State School in the Wide Bay-Burnett region won the minister for education's Young Legends Award. These schools are great examples of the sustainable practices being adopted by our schools and students. But they are just the tip of the iceberg.

Along with my department, Education Queensland, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council is one of 17 key partners in the government's Queensland Environmentally Sustainable Schools Initiative—QESSI. A total of 914 schools—or approximately half of all schools in the state—have participated in one or more of the QESSI Alliance partner programs during the past four years. Schools have demonstrated significant financial savings through many sustainability initiatives.

Between 2003-04 and 2004-05, the water consumption of state schools across Queensland was reduced by eight per cent in that year alone. In the subsequent year—2004-05 to 2005-06—there was a further reduction of more than 20 per cent. In stage 1 of the school Water Efficiency Management Plan, \$3.5 million was allocated to retrofit all taps and showers in 381 schools in areas under level 5 water restrictions with flow control devices. In stage 2 this year another \$8 million has been allocated for water-saving measures in south-east Queensland schools, including dual-flush toilets and water efficient urinals. Across the state 827 schools have installed, or are planning to install, water tanks and 2,200 tanks have been installed in schools in recent years. Under the Solar Schools Program, 78 schools have incorporated photovoltaic solar panels over the past six years.

I would like to congratulate our schools across Queensland on their achievements to date and I look forward to further advances in the environmental sustainability of our schools. If the enthusiasm and accomplishments of our students are a strong indication of statewide attitudes, then the future of our environment is in safe hands.