



Speech by

Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

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PREP YEAR

Mr HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (9.36 pm): Earlier today I had the pleasure of attending a full school assembly at Stafford State School in my electorate. Today's assembly focused on welcoming the newest and youngest members of that school community: the 27 prep students. As the Minister for Education and Training advised the House yesterday, last week we witnessed education history in Queensland with the first of the universal prep year starting across the state.

In schools around the Stafford electorate last week, 323 young minds and bodies were among the first intake of the prep year. For a week and a half now, they have been enjoying wonderful facilities and the guidance of dedicated staff at all my local primary schools. Our local parish schools—Holy Cross, OLA, Queen of Apostles and St Anthony's—have provided excellent environments for this new beginning for educational experience.

Our local state schools have all seen outstanding improvements as part of the largest capital works program in Education Queensland's history. Somerset Hills State School and Wavell Heights State School benefited from minor refurbishments in their old preschool classrooms and curriculum resources to the tune of \$27,350 and \$46,878 respectively. Stafford Heights State School has enjoyed a major refurbishment of two classrooms and resources costing \$563,667. Kedron State School, with which a preschool unit had never been associated, has a superb new two-classroom building, which with curriculum resources cost \$600,067.

Today at Stafford State School I was able to inspect with Acting Principal Garry Drummond the completed and operational new two-classroom building, which again with curriculum resources cost \$570,000. These new classrooms were required by the consolidation of state education in Stafford onto the one campus.

This may not be bricks and mortar; perhaps it is building blocks and 'bendy-goes'. It is also important to acknowledge the educational opportunities that are more important arising out of this new beginning for education in the Stafford electorate. This afternoon at Stafford State School, I took part in what was in effect a handing over of a 'baton' from one educational generation to another. I say this as I also attended a ceremony in December to acknowledge the end of preschool at Stafford. At that event, I not only played the role of local MP; I was also the only representative present of the first intake of preschool students at Stafford in 1975. At that time, in response to a huge demand, a preschool unit was opened at Collier Street with students taken in September for the last term of 1976. So a generation later, today I joined many parents from my own cohort attending the Stafford State School assembly and celebrating the beginning of prep.