



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR INALA

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EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Ms PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (7.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill. Quoting the minister in his second reading speech, the purpose of this bill is to amend the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 to enable the Queensland Studies Authority to develop and administer common national tests in literacy and numeracy.

Early this afternoon the member for Woodridge referred to the fact that it is education that will determine the future of our young children. I strongly believe in what the member said. I believe that education is about opportunity. I have said in this House and to people in my electorate that it is about giving the children in Inala the exact same opportunity through education that the children in Clayfield, Cairns, Mount Isa, Mount Gravatt or Sandgate have. It is about giving everybody the same chance in education.

The member for Woodridge and I both share very similar electorates. I agree with her that education needs to respond to the students in each area. Our areas are somewhat unique in that we have a very large multicultural group of children. We also have a large number of children who have disabilities and learning problems and those children who just have problems with day-to-day coping as a result of issues such as domestic violence in the home. We need to make sure that education is for all, not just the brightest kids.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister on his vision and commitment to the \$1 billion Tomorrow's Schools initiative. In my electorate of Inala this means that around \$50 million will be spent locally modernising five local schools: Durack, Inala, Serviceton South, Richlands East and Glenala State High School. Everywhere I go in my electorate people are coming up to me and telling me that they are extremely grateful for the minister's commitment to this funding in the area. It will modernise our schools and transform the Inala electorate.

This money gives us the unique opportunity to respond to the needs of our local students. One opportunity we do have is to make Glenala High School a skills centre of excellence. Already the task force that is looking at the Tomorrow's Schools of the Inala cluster is looking at the future of Glenala High School. It is coming out very, very strongly that they do not want it just to be a skills based centre of excellence; they also want it to have a strong academic stream. They want children to have a choice as to whether they go into academia—go to university—or go into a TAFE course which means that they will end up having a job. This, of course, will help the very high youth unemployment that we have in our local area.

One of the local teachers from Glenala mentioned to me that as soon as they stopped offering physics in our local high school all of the science students stopped going to Glenala. What we saw was a mass exodus of students to Corinda State High School and also to Forest Lake State High School. We need to make sure that we offer those core academic subjects so that the students do come back to that high school.

At the end of last year when I attended several year 7 graduations I was concerned that when students were asked what school they will be attending for high school only four out of 10 were saying they

were going to the local high school. They were just bypassing it. We need to make sure that when we rejuvenate our high school they all start attending Glenala.

Earlier the member for Bundamba was talking about a unique initiative that was happening in her area. That initiative involved running a bus from the Redbank Plains State High School to Bremer TAFE. What a great initiative. This is actually taking the students to the TAFE. The problem that I have in my area is that the local students when they graduate will not go to Bremer TAFE because it is just too far. It would mean catching a bus, hopping on a train and then walking to the TAFE. We need to start offering the courses offered at TAFE at the local high school and open it up to the adults who are living in the area as well who are unemployed. It is not just about giving the schoolkids opportunities; it is also about giving adults opportunities. I hope to have a forum later this year in my local area to actually talk about this issue a lot more.

I am pleased to report that Michael Knox has been appointed locally as the principal of Glenala State High School. I am sure that his leadership will move the school forward. I will read out to the House an article which appeared in today's *Satellite* titled 'Glenala on its way to top school'. This also addresses some of the issues that the member for Nicklin raised earlier about how it can impact on a local community when there are a number of principals going through a school. We must ensure that the school has stability. The article states—

Glenala State High School is not only welcoming their year eight students, but also a new principal and vice principal. Principal Michael Knox and vice principal David Newman are already tackling issues at the school head on. Mr Knox came from Cleveland High where he was acting principal for 15 months. 'The job here was advertised and I applied for it', he said. 'I was keen to go to a smaller school, and there are a lot of proactive programs here'. After 25 years in the education field, Mr Knox is well equipped to guide the school through 2008. Students and teachers at the school can expect a bit more stability from last year, when the school went through five principals. When questioned about the number of principals the school had gone through recently, Mr Knox said he planned to be around for a while. 'I'm planning on staying as long as it takes me to do what I want to do,' he said. 'I want to make it the first choice school for the area.'

I agree with Michael Knox, the new principal, and I commend the bill to the House.