



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

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STATE SCHOOLS

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.23 pm): My matter of public importance this afternoon is that of education policy and what the minister spoke about in his ministerial statement. This morning the minister spoke about renewing old schools. He does not talk about closing schools, which is what he is actually doing. He said that all Queensland students should have better facilities. He spoke about the Bligh government building on its achievements and anticipating the needs of tomorrow's Queensland. So let us have a look at what is actually happening in education in Queensland in Labor electorates. We have Richlands and Inala West state schools in Inala and Durack being closed. We have Blackstone, Dinmore, Bremer High and Amberley being closed in Ipswich. Parents from Xavier special school have contacted me saying that students are now being moved to Mount Gravatt West Special School instead of staying at Whites Hill State College, as they would like to.

Mrs Menkens interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take that interjection from the member for Burdekin.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! If the member wishes to interject she should resume her seat.

Mr LANGBROEK: We have Kenilworth State Community College, which has been changed from a prep to year 10 to a prep to year 7. I want to table more than 190 letters from the local community who do not want their school changed, but this is under the State Schools of Tomorrow plan which the honourable minister was talking about this morning.

Tabled paper: Correspondence relating to Kenilworth State Community College.

In the Deputy Premier's electorate, Wynnum North, Wynnum Central and Lindum state schools are all being merged or closed or put into bigger facilities because this government believes that bigger is better when the parents in these Labor electorates do not believe so.

This morning we heard that Upper Barron State School is on the chopping block. It is a tablelands school that has served the local community since 1910. It is a 98-year-old heart of the community that is going to be closed. As the member for Mirani pointed out to me this morning, Dows Creek State School in Mackay opened in 1895 and it is going to close its doors for the last time at the end of the school year. This decision has already affected the school community, with parents outraged that their government could make such a decision at a time when the town's population is booming as a result of nearby mining towns.

A couple of weeks ago on a bleak October night I went to Blackstone State School, where I sat amongst 50 parents and students living in a rolled-gold Labor electorate. They do not want their school closed. It is a similar story for Dinmore State School. The schools to be closed in Ipswich under the short-sighted State Schools of Tomorrow program are also being short-changed when it comes to maintenance funding. While the Bligh government would close the schools down in a day if it had the choice, Blackstone and Dinmore will not close until the end of 2009, yet neither of these schools will receive any money for vital maintenance to keep their kids safe until the schools are closed in 12 months time. It calls into

question the commitment of the local member, Jo-Ann Miller, the member for Bundamba, who has lamely suggested she might work to save some of the buildings on these properties.

It makes a joke of the minister for education's claim in the House this morning that Queensland students deserve the best. We agree with the minister. So why is he allowing school communities in Ipswich to suffer and potentially putting students at risk by refusing to invest in vital school maintenance? In Wynnum, Inala and Ipswich Labor is turning its back on its own supporters. How many more of Queensland's 1,251 state schools face the axe under this government?

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: The Bligh government believes that small schools have no place in public education and should have no future in Queensland. I want to contrast that with LNP policy. We believe that all schools play a vital role in the education of the next generation of Queenslanders. We do not believe bigger is better. On the contrary, the bigger the school, the bigger the risk that students will not get the personal attention they need to succeed at school and, as a result, they will get left behind. The LNP is committed to keeping the school gates open and providing the support and resources our schools need to thrive.

There are a number of regional schools that will close under the Bligh government. The Labor government has a vendetta against small schools and a complete lack of understanding of regional and remote education. This is evident in the alarming differential in benchmark results between metropolitan students and provincial, rural and remote students.

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjections from the honourable member for Inala, who is sitting here allowing her state schools to be closed. Under LNP policy, the State Schools of Tomorrow program will end. We are going to support our teachers. We are going to give schools more teachers. We are going to have smaller classes. We are going to have more full-time teacher aides. We are going to deal with behaviour management issues. We are going to expand air conditioning in schools. Under the Results Plus policy of the LNP, we accept that education is the best long-term economic policy. We are determined to make Queenslanders the top of the class again. In our policy we have committed \$260 million over four years, which leaves a sizeable amount left out of the State Schools of Tomorrow budget, which we will use to make sure that we focus on teachers, the support that they need, behaviour management issues so that parents can be confident—

Time expired.