



Speech by

Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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MUTCHILBA STATE SCHOOL

Mr KNUTH (Charters Towers—NPA) (9.44 pm): I would like to raise an issue that relates to Mutchilba State School, which is a small primary school in far-north Queensland that has over 30 students. Recently on a visit I had the privilege to meet many of the parents of students at the school who expressed concerns to me about the large numbers of peacocks that are inhabiting the school areas. Recently, there were reports of up to 50 peacocks in the school grounds and at times there has been an estimate of over 200 in one hit.

The peacocks come out from near the Walsh River and creeks and then flock to the school grounds. The children are at risk of disease and infection from these birds, which leave their droppings throughout the school play areas and eating areas. Children try to be very careful and not step on the droppings, but they inevitably do and tread the mess into classrooms and onto carpets. The cleaning staff are sick and tired of having to spend hours of their time cleaning up after them.

The school boasts a brand-new \$65,000 playground, which includes sofffall to prevent injuries. The rubber fall has to be cleaned daily to remove the droppings of the peacocks. There are droppings all over the roof of the school, which parents fear will contaminate the drinking water following rain. They need some assistance to rid the school of the unwanted pests. These peacocks are not native birds. They are a nuisance and a pest for the school staff. The school is a wonderful little school that works hard to ensure that its students get the best education on offer, but it is frustrated by the time and effort that goes into cleaning up after these pests.

I call on the minister to recognise the dilemma that these parents face on a daily basis and offer some assistance to them to ensure that the peacocks are no longer given free rein over the school grounds and to ensure that the safety, health and wellbeing of the children are put before these wild birds, which are in plague proportion in this area.