



Speech by

## Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Wednesday, 20 May 2009

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### PALMWOODS

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.15 pm): The past couple of weeks have been hard for my home town of Palmwoods and the neighbouring towns of Woombye and Nambour. At the outset, I would like to pass on my sincerest condolences to the families and friends of those tragically killed in the horrific accident on the Nambour Connection Road just under two weeks ago. As a father of young children myself, I can only begin to imagine the pain and distress that these families must be experiencing. Yet, in their grief the same families have responded with a level of maturity and clarity that I would struggle to emulate by calling on all drivers to pause as they turn the ignition to ensure their head is focused on the task at hand. I echo their caution and call on all road users to take extra care, even extra time if that is necessary—arrive late if you have to—but remain alert and remain safe on our roads.

This evening, I would like to pay particular tribute to the staff and teachers of Palmwoods State School and the Sunshine Coast education district. I have been in contact with these dedicated individuals over the past couple of weeks and commend their quick, caring and child focused response on behalf of, and to the benefit of, the students of Palmwoods State School. I believe these students, particularly those in the prep classes and year 6, are better prepared to deal with the trauma they are currently experiencing and may confront again in the future.

I would especially acknowledge Mr Rob McAlpine, the regional executive director of the education department on the Sunshine Coast. It is my understanding that Rob and his team, along with parents and members of the broader community, met to discuss how to best support and counsel the students on their return the Monday following the accident. Parents were also provided with information outlining how to identify behaviour changes that might indicate that their child is experiencing trauma and grief.

I would also acknowledge Ms Sharyn Rieger, the principal of Palmwoods State School, and her staff. Many of the local children have shared with me their experiences of the school's memorial service held last Friday. Clearly, Ms Rieger and her staff had gone to considerable lengths to provide an opportunity for the school community to grieve the loss of their classmates and students in a sensitive and child-appropriate manner.

On behalf of the broader Palmwoods community, I pass on my thanks and gratitude to Mr McAlpine, Ms Rieger and all of the staff associated with Palmwoods State School. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated.