



Speech by

Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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GLASS HOUSE ELECTORATE, SCHOOLS

Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (9.22 pm): Glass House is home to some 18 schools—14 of them state-run primary schools. Over the past months I have had considerable pleasure in visiting and engaging in the educational and community life of many of these schools. Just today I was again able to greet year 7 students from Elimbah State School as they toured Parliament House.

Many of these same students were in attendance at a recent school assembly where it was my privilege to award the age champion medallions and house champion shield from their athletics carnival. To Josh, Sophie, Sam, Jaiden, Georgia, Angela, Jamie, Michaela, Kerwin, Rhonda, Douglas and Melina: congratulations on achieving outstanding results in your respective age groups. To Sophie Hartley, Michaela Grant and Jamie Hancock: well done on your extraspecial achievements as overall champions. And, of course, congratulations to Brolga House, who took out the house shield for 2009.

Similarly, I was also present for Conondale State School's leadership ceremony and speechcraft presentations. Presenting Chloe, Banu, Lily, Alex, Adam and Bridie with their leadership shirts and certificates has certainly been a highlight of my role to date. And to Mr Gray and his year 6-7 class: thank you for one of the best preparations for future question times I could ever have asked for. For over an hour and a half I was grilled on everything from my salary to my views on Traveston Dam. I look forward to welcoming Mr Gray's class to parliament at some stage in the near future and to presenting additional leadership certificates to other students in his class.

When I consider the fine achievements of these students and teachers in my electorate, I must confess bewilderment as to why this Bligh government would seek to short-change them. It is common knowledge that schools with years prep to 7 are funded using a complex calculation that includes student enrolments. For starters, this calculation has been set in stone since 1989. It is not indexed. It has not been adjusted at all to take into consideration increases in the costs of operating schools.

Since 1989 we have had the equivalent of a 71.4 per cent increase in the CPI, yet no school has received comparable compensation to cover the costs of basic necessities such as toilet paper and stationery. What is more, after fighting very hard to gain commitments of an extra \$100 per child in primary school—that is \$77 million in funding across the state—the Australian Government Primary Principals Association is scratching its head in astonishment that some 80 per cent of that funding has been pilfered by Education Queensland and will not be passed on directly to the schools for their discretionary use.

Of all the states, only South Australia and the Northern Territory get an A rating from the AGPPA. Even New South Wales has received a higher rating than Queensland, with 50 per cent of the funding going directly to the schools and the remainder into teachers' wages. Queensland's schools will be lucky if they see \$20 per child. I call on the Bligh government to do the right thing and forward all of the \$77 million to the state schools themselves, to allow the local school communities to allocate the money where it is needed most.