



Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Wednesday, 25 November 2009

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND, SCHOOLS

Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (10.16 pm): Over the past month I have been to a number of school presentation evenings across Far North Queensland. Most were emceed by students, many reflected the unique nature of the school concerned, but all were certainly entertaining.

Almost on a daily basis we see stereotyping of our young people that, if given enough exposure, can begin to be seen as reality rather than the views of a select few. At these presentation evenings I was left utterly impressed by the calibre of students who shone not only in an academic sense but who had also achieved in the sporting, cultural and community spheres. On the whole, the students demonstrated wisdom and dedication beyond their years. I was particularly impressed by the valedictory speech delivered by Miss Nicole Schumacher from Gordonvale State High School, which I now table. It is worthy of inclusion in the permanent record of our state's parliament.

Tabled paper: Speech by Nicole Schumacher [\[1490\]](#).

Another highlight was representing the Minister for Education and Training and presenting certificates on his behalf to the first graduating class of SchoolTech, a vocation based senior school in Cairns. In 2008, the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE and Woree State High School launched SchoolTech, which sees students study years 11 and 12 at the Cairns TAFE campus and specialise in a trade or vocation area. Upon completion of their senior studies, students graduate with a Queensland Certificate of Education and a TAFE qualification. The students come from all across Far North Queensland.

The program is a first for the Queensland government and is driven by the Queensland Skills Plan, which aims to move secondary school students into further education, training and employment while providing the skills necessary to enter the workforce. It represents a major step towards creating a skilled workforce to serve local industry.

The SchoolTech program has quite rightly received widespread support from within the Cairns business community. It is the valuable partnerships between schools, businesses and community groups that have been the key to its success. This is also why the program is viewed as a best practice model for bringing schools and the Queensland TAFE sector closer together. The Bligh government is committed to encouraging three out of four Queenslanders holding trade, training or tertiary qualifications by 2020. By increasing people's skills, programs like SchoolTech are changing lives and helping to build the skills base in our region.

I will finish with some words for the more than 45,000 Queensland Year 12 students who have this year completed high school: you have reached an important milestone in your lives and will soon embark on new pathways into employment, training, or, in some cases, tertiary study. I wish you the best of luck as you enter the next phase of your lives and I hope you continue on the journey of lifelong learning. To quote Miss Schumacher—

Inevitably you will fail in some form or another and you will survive and you will reach your goals ... Ultimately, (you) have to decide for (yourselves) what constitutes failure, but the world is quite eager to give you a set of criteria if you let it. Do not be afraid of what comes next, of the possibility of failure, because failure is important and in many cases failure delivers more benefits than success.

With those words, I say I have confidence in the next generation of young Queenslanders. They represent our future and we need to harness their talents to make Queensland a better place for tomorrow. From what I have seen, our future is in good hands.