



Speech by

Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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KAWANA ELECTORATE, SCHOOLS

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (9.19 pm): I rise in this chamber tonight to speak about the quality of education administered by this state government and its bureaucrats. Last Thursday, 28 May, I had the pleasure of launching the Kawana electorate school safety month. This safety campaign came about as a result of the overwhelming number of complaints I have received and issues that have been raised with me by various P&C groups in my electorate.

The meeting was a tremendous success with attendees including local principals, P&C representatives, Queensland Police Service representatives and representatives of the Morcombe Foundation. While addressing the topic of safety around our schools, which includes pedestrian safety and also traffic awareness, many other issues were also raised including school overcrowding. Recently the department of education released figures indicating that some schools in Queensland were well over capacity. In my electorate, one school in particular fell into this category sitting at 109 per cent capacity and another school at 97 per cent of its estimated capacity.

I am dismayed at the fact that the Bligh state government is continually dropping the ball in matters concerning our students' education. It failed to negotiate an amicable pay arrangement with the Queensland Teachers Union that would not only see teachers at public schools in this state paid a comparable wage to those in other states but also attract back many of the quality teachers who have left the profession. NAPLAN results also indicate that Queensland students are almost on the bottom of the ladder when comparing their literacy and numeracy skills to those of students in other states in Australia. Last night we heard that Queensland has the highest rates of internal child bullying in our schools.

The safety of our children around schools has been compromised by the lack of planning from this government for parking, drop-off zones and traffic infrastructure around our schools. But I have some exciting news this evening. I call upon all of the members opposite to listen very carefully. I am glad they are so enthusiastic.

The state government has committed to building a new school at Bundilla on the Sunshine Coast. This is a chance for the government to finally get it right. Prior to laying the foundations of this new school and other schools announced in Queensland, I would urge the minister and the Premier to sit down with the principals and the P&Cs—not the George Street bureaucrats but the people delivering grassroots education in this state.

It does not work to plonk a prep to 12 school on a small road, with inadequate drop-off zones and road infrastructure surrounding it. It does not work to plonk a primary school in a cul-de-sac that school buses cannot turn around in. All of these issues could have been avoided if this state government had planned and discussed them with local stakeholders.

It pains me to say it, but if only the government had a plan for improving education standards like it seemingly has a fix for the dire state of the economy—sell, sell sell; going cheap, going cheap—then maybe we would have a proactive approach to this topic rather than the usual reactive one by this incompetent and uncaring government.