



Speech by

Mandy Johnstone

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Hansard Tuesday, 24 November 2009

TOWNSVILLE ELECTORATE, SCHOOLS

Ms JOHNSTONE (Townsville—ALP) (9.34 pm): I welcome the opportunity to advise the House of a recent meet and greet I held with parents from the 21 schools in the electorate of Townsville. Monday evening 2 November was a great night for me. Having such a diverse range of needs in the electorate, I thought it would be a good idea to get all the P&Cs and P&Fs together so that I could get to know them. I felt that this was also a great opportunity for everyone to learn from each other and share ideas.

The night was a great success, with parents from primary and high schools, public and private schools and even a boarding school attending. We were all particularly impressed with the three parents from Bwgcolman Community School on Palm Island who came across to Townsville especially for the meeting. Bwgcolman P&C is a recently re-established parent group who are keen to learn from other parents on how they can effectively support and direct their school to get great outcomes for their kids. These parents are committed to ensuring that children on Palm Island get the same standard of education that kids on the mainland receive.

What we found was that, while each school has their own individual needs and issues, there were many similarities shared with each other. Robust discussion included talking about pressures facing students to perform academically, tuckshop operations, Building the Education Revolution, suggestions about the special needs of boarders and the legal roles and responsibilities of the P&Cs committees.

To Leonie Bligh, Merle Robertson, Jeanie Ling, Jessie Maher, Maree Parsons, Louise Doolan, Narelle Searston, Les Searston and David Taylor: thank you for taking the time to attend on the night. We have all agreed that this was such a great success that this meeting will now occur quarterly. Attendees have swapped contact numbers and email addresses and have agreed to support each other in their important roles in our school communities.

I would now also like to take a minute to do a little bragging about one of the schools in my electorate. The Hermit Park State School has received worldwide recognition this week. I have spoken in this place before about the leading-edge use of information technology and the environmentally sustainable behaviours being undertaken by Principal Clayton Carnes and the Hermit Park school community.

Hermit Park State School has been selected as one of only 12 schools worldwide to be a Microsoft mentor school. The school attended a meeting in Brazil last month to learn about visioning and new types of ICT learning. Hermit Park is mentoring schools in Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates over the next year to assist with their development. They are also helping 20 other schools in Australia as part of the Australian Microsoft program. As part of the program the school also won a touch-screen computer and a professional development package for their teachers. Good on you, Hermit Park State School; we are all proud of you.