



Speech by

## Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Hansard Thursday, 16 September 2010

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### COURIER-MAIL SPELLING BEE; GLASS HOUSE ELECTORATE, SCHOOLS

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (9.30 pm): I would like to begin by congratulating seven-year-old Matthew Gaske from Wamuran State School who won the year 1 to 3 category of the *Courier-Mail* spelling bee. Top stuff, Matthew, and congrats to all at Wamuran State School.

On numerous occasions now, I have raised the Woodford community's calls for a full high school. My requests have been met with the same pat answer from the Minister for Education: 'Give us 1,100 students, guaranteed for 20 years, and we'll give you the school'—as if all high schools in Queensland achieve that magical figure. Tonight I would like to give the minister further food for thought. I would like to share the concerns of Mrs Annette Cannon of Delaneys Creek.

Like many parents, in conjunction with the desires of their children, Annette has made the decision to send her year 11 son to Kilcoy State High School for his final two years. Each day, her son catches a bus from Delaneys Creek to Woodford and then the Department of Transport bus to Kilcoy at a total cost of \$15 a day, or \$75 a week. Concerned at this exorbitant cost, Annette contacted both the education and transport departments. The education department confirmed that the Woodford P-10 state school feeds into various schools and that there is no catchment area defined for Woodford State School, Kilcoy State High School or Tullawong State High School. The Department of Transport, on the other hand, decreed that because her address was Delaneys Creek her son must pay for transport to Kilcoy—he would get no subsidised travel, regardless of the fact that he was making his own way to Woodford to catch the 'subsidised school bus'.

The Department of Transport stated that Tullawong State High School is the feeder school for the Cannons' address. What madness is this? The education department has no defined catchment area and offers parents and students choice, but the Department of Transport takes away that choice by defining feeder schools. Who is in charge here? In the absence of a full high school at Woodford, the education department's no catchment policy is the only sensible option and most parents and students will therefore choose Kilcoy. It is smaller, it is rural, like Woodford, and it offers—

**Mrs Pratt:** It's a very good school.

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. It offers a range of subjects many Woodford students are looking for. It also allows for an easier transition from year 10 at Woodford. So why is that option being taken away from parents, not by the education department but by the transport department? What happened to choice? Why can the transport department dictate where students attend school? Why is advice from the two departments contradictory? Why must this contradiction cost my constituents?

I will be writing to both ministers seeking an explanation. To make the point, I call on the Minister for Education to reconsider his decision not to expand Woodford State School to year 12. Let us do away with the problem altogether and offer senior schooling locally. While he does that, I ask the Minister for Education to resolve this ridiculous situation that is costing Woodford families and costing Woodford students.