



Speech by

Di Farmer

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard Wednesday, 19 May 2010

SEVEN HILLS STATE SCHOOL

Ms FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (10.20 pm): It was a wonderful experience to attend last weekend the jubilee celebrations for Seven Hills State School. This school is very important in our local community. It has always been quite small, but in recent years has shown a steady growth—so much so that it has an enrolment management plan to make sure it is catering to the increasing numbers from all over the Bulimba electorate, and not just in the catchment area, who recognise that it has something special to offer. That special thing is the strong sense of community which envelops the school—whether it be the community care group that makes sure the local families are all looked out for, the adopt-a-farmer program that makes sure the students understand where their food comes from or the bushcare group, run by Eris and Reiner, which aligns the students to their local bushland and the ways in which they can care for their environment. There are so many ways in which the school community is encouraged to connect. It is certainly no accident that all of this has happened under the stewardship of the wise and warm principal, Michelle Morrissey.

Last Saturday afternoon was even more special as it signified the 50th anniversary of the school. The event was celebrated with a wine and cheese function to which all past and present students and their families were invited. No-one was quite sure how many people would turn up, but, at last count, it bordered on around 500. When I left in the late afternoon, it did not look like anyone was going to leave for quite some time as they were all having so much fun catching up on their past, seeing their childhood friends and reminiscing about this most important time of their lives.

The anniversary would not have been the same event without the dedication of the wonderful Eris Jolly and her husband, Norm. Eris knows Seven Hills like the back of her hand and has written the book *Seven Hills of Brisbane*, which is still sold at the local newsagent and at several other local venues. For the jubilee celebrations, Eris curated a photographic history of Seven Hills and its school which had all enthralled. I was fortunate to have Eris spend quite some time talking me through all the photos, showing me views from the some of the streets I know so well, like D'Arcy Road, Oateson-Skyline Drive, Foxton Street, the Corso, Paramount Drive—which looked so different in the photos.

Fifty years ago the suburb was only just being developed. Young families would traverse goat tracks to get to the houses that were slowly being built. Many of the families there on Saturday were telling me just those sorts of stories—Ron and Paula Burns, Eris and Norm and their son Paul and daughter-in-law Lesley, the Lanes. It was wonderful to get a sense of the community at that point 50 years ago.

Some 84 students were enrolled at Seven Hills State School on the first day, 25 January 1960. The enrolments reached 141 by the end of the year. Now the school has around 300 students. Past students also at the event, among many, many others, were Val Cassidy, the Baumgartners, the Lindsays and their sons, Colin Kemp with his daughter Pam and son Greg, Val Cassidy, Joanne Gill, Anne Orth and Ben Giorgio-Bellotti. It was a privilege to be at this event. I enjoy every moment I spend at the school. I was honoured to be included in the celebration of both its past and present.