



Speech by

Hon. Geoff Wilson

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Schools, Infrastructure

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Education and Training) (9.57 am): The start of the 2010 school year saw around 730,000 students enrolled in Queensland schools. Queensland's population is growing every year and we are seeing increases in the number of students attending state, Catholic and independent schools. Around 487,000 students returned to our state schools from 28 January, including primary, secondary and special schools. A further 242,000 students are attending Queensland Catholic schools and independent schools. I would especially like to welcome those students just beginning their education journey—that is, the 57,000 prep students who walked through the school gates for the first time this year. Around 40,000 of them took their first steps into a state school, with 17,000 attending non-state schools.

The Bligh government is planning and building for this growth. Two new schools, two relocated schools and one amalgamated school have opened their doors this year. We are building world-class buildings and facilities, and we are building a world-class education system. Last week I joined the Premier and the Deputy Premier at the official opening of the Brisbane Bayside State College which was part of the \$150 million State Schools of Tomorrow initiative to upgrade state schools in the Brisbane Wynnum-Manly area. The construction of the Brisbane Bayside State College created more than 380 jobs. Of course, those on the other side of this chamber wanted to abolish the State Schools of Tomorrow building program at the last election. It was great to see the staff and students enjoying the fantastic facilities at this new school.

In coming weeks we will also be heading to the Bay View State School at Thornlands, another school with fantastic ecofriendly facilities in one of Brisbane's fastest growing areas. A new school at Peregrin Springs on the Sunshine Coast has also opened its doors for the first time in 2010. The Bay View State School and the Peregrin Springs State School are the first two schools to be built as part of the Bligh government's \$1.1 billion partnership with Aspire to build seven schools, with the next five schools to be delivered over the next three years.

This public-private partnership project will create 2,150 jobs in the construction industry over the 4½ year period of construction. Both of these schools are four-star green rated and offer cutting-edge facilities, including high-tech classrooms fitted with wireless networks. The other schools that opened their doors for the start of the school year were the relocated Amberley District State School and Innisfail State College, which was the amalgamation of Innisfail State High School and the Innisfail Inclusive Education Centre with the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE on the former TAFE site—another State Schools of Tomorrow project opposed by those on the other side. The construction of Amberley District State School created approximately 196 jobs and the construction of Innisfail State College created approximately 276 jobs. In total, more than 300 new classrooms were provided across Queensland to accommodate growth in 2010.

We are also renewing and refurbishing Queensland's older schools under the State Schools of Tomorrow project that I referred to earlier. Round 2 of the initiative, due for completion in June 2011, will

see the refurbishment of selected facilities at more than 300 primary, secondary and special schools. We have joined with the federal government in making a \$2 billion investment in education infrastructure this year. We want to give students and teachers access to top-quality, modern teaching and learning environments with cutting-edge technology. The Bligh government is spending more than \$10 million a day on school building projects. This level of development in our schools is unparalleled and unlikely to be witnessed again in our lifetimes. Some tough decisions have had to be made to ensure that we can keep building and modernising schools, but we know that investing in education is an investment in Queensland's future.