



Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

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MORAYFIELD ELECTORATE, READY READER PROGRAM

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (10.19 pm): During the last month, I have had the pleasure of going back to school. To promote the Queensland Ready Reader program, I have been visiting schools in the Morayfield state electorate and have been reading to prep and year 1 students. So far I have been to Burpengary State School, Minimbah State School, Jinibara State School and Narangba Valley State School. I also visited Burpengary Meadows State School with the parliamentary secretary for education and member for Broadwater. I will also be dropping by the other schools in the Morayfield state electorate over the next month or so.

I have enjoyed visiting our local schools and am pleased that in some small way I have helped our young people with their reading. On each visit to the respective schools, I have read a book called *Mrs Echidna's Dilemma*. This book is written by a local author, Betty Johnston. Betty lives at Narangba and is an active community member. Betty's book was inspired by a patchwork quilt that she made over a number of years during her train trips to Brisbane. I used to catch the train with Betty and I clearly remember watching her patchwork quilt take shape. From those humble beginnings, the book *Mrs Echidna's Dilemma* was created.

To acknowledge Betty's outstanding work, I have been pleased to not only read this great book to students at our local schools but also donate a copy of the book to each school in the Morayfield state electorate. The books have been a real hit and I understand from a number of school principals that the books have been a popular addition to their school libraries. If the reactions of the prep and year 1 students are anything to go by, then they do not just appreciate the quality of Betty's story but they enjoy reading generally and have a genuine interest and passion for reading.

The prep and year 1 students did not get off that easy. After reading to them, I gave each student some homework to do. Of course, the students were less enthusiastic with that particular part of my visit, but their homework was fairly straightforward. I asked them to tell everyone in their house about how much they loved reading and I asked them to encourage people in their home to join the Queensland Ready Readers program. I did this because it is important for parents to read to their children more often at home. We know that reading aloud to young children improves their development. We also know that national and international research shows that there was a 90 per cent chance that a child who was a poor reader at the end of year 1 would remain a poor reader at the end of year 4.

I am proud of this state government's commitment to encouraging more parents to read to their children from an early age. By visiting our local schools and reading to our local students, I hope that I am able to encourage more people to get involved in the Queensland Ready Readers program and give our young people a flying start to their education.