



Speech by


Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 6 April 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Operation Queenslander, Schools

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.03 am): As part of Operation Queenslander, the Bligh government is continuing to work hard to rebuild Queensland schools following our summer of sorrow. Across the state, damaged resources are being replaced, classrooms are being repaired and students are returning to their normal school environments. We made it a priority to get schools back up and running so as to minimise disruption to the learning journeys of young Queenslanders. I am pleased to update the House today on the extraordinary progress that is being made.

Mr Speaker, 212 state schools were damaged when floodwaters swept through Central, South-West and South-East Queensland. Some schools required just minor work, such as new carpet, while others needed extensive repairs, but we ensured all students were able to attend classes on the first day of the school year on 24 January. Only three schools—Milton State School, Rocklea State School and Milperra State High School—were so badly damaged that they could not open. Classes at those schools were temporarily relocated to nearby facilities. Several year levels at Brassall, Jindalee and Corinda state schools were also shifted to allow for classroom repairs.

Since then, school life has been returning to normal—classroom by classroom, school by school. By next week, all flood affected schools bar one will be back in business. Students and staff will return to Rocklea State School this coming Monday, 11 April, while classes will resume for Brassall students in years 6 and 7 in their refurbished classrooms midweek. Repairs are still being carried out at Milperra State High School and I am advised that they will be completed during term 2.

A massive recovery effort is also taking place at schools following Cyclone Yasi. This category 5 storm caused damage to 196 schools across Central, North and Far North Queensland. The hardest hit school was Tully State High School which suffered significant structural damage. At this school, an entire classroom block will need to be demolished. Damage was also done to roofs, air-conditioning units, shade sails and play equipment. The Department of Education and Training is working closely with the school community on replacements and repairs. Departmental staff have visited the school and will continue to work with the principal and the P&C to determine a master plan for the rebuild. The Bligh government is committed to the rebuilding of Queensland schools. We are in it for the long haul. We will not cut and run when Queensland students, parents, principals and teachers need us the most.