



Speech by


Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 11 May 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kindergartens

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.03 am): Kindergarten provides a strong educational foundation to ensure children get the best possible start to learning and life. The Bligh government is committed to providing universal access to quality kindergarten programs for all Queensland children in the year before prep.

To help achieve this, we are investing \$321 million to establish up to 240 extra kindergarten services across the state by 2014. We are making strong progress and are on track, with 22 extra services already open and one more opening at St Andrew's Catholic College at Redlynch in the great far northern electorate of Barron River later this year.

By the end of 2012, we will have opened a total of 108 extra kindergarten services on state and non-state school sites—40 more than originally planned. Co-locating kindergarten services with schools helps children transition to prep because they are already familiar with the school environment and it also makes it convenient for parents with school-age children.

The Bligh government is proud of the strong educational partnership we have developed with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland. So it is in that spirit that I announce for the first time today that we are providing more than \$22 million this year to help establish 24 kindergarten services at Catholic and independent schools by 2013.

These extra services will be located in areas where there is demand for places for kindergarten-aged children. Locations include Springfield, Caloundra, the Gold Coast, Warwick, Ipswich, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Hervey Bay, Beaudesert and Townsville. In addition to our kindergarten building agenda, we are also providing funding to help long-day-care services provide kindy programs delivered by qualified and quality teachers.

More Queensland parents are recognising the value of kindergarten participation with figures showing strong growth in enrolments over the past three years. Forty per cent of kindy-age children were enrolled in a kindergarten program in 2010—ahead of our target of 36 per cent for the year. The 40 per cent participation rate last year is also an increase from 29 per cent in 2008 and 32 per cent in 2009.

The Bligh government is committed to providing Queensland children with a quality education in the early years and, through our significant investment and reforms, we are ensuring our children are on the pathway to learning and success.