



Speech by

## Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 25 May 2011

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### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Kindergartens; Lowood State High School, Fire

**Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.22 am): A quality education in early childhood gives children a great start along the pathway to learning and success. Through carefully designed programs such as at kindergarten, children are able to learn, play, socialise and develop motor skills. The Bligh government has recognised the advantages that kindergarten has for our children. That is why we are making the program available to every child in Queensland. We are investing \$321 million to establish up to 240 extra kindy services in areas of need across Queensland by 2014.

Like all areas of Queensland, the Mackay-Whitsunday region is benefiting from this program too. Just this week, my ministerial colleague and the hard working member for Whitsunday, Jan Jarratt, opened a new kindergarten service at the Seaforth C&K Community Kindergarten. The state government provided \$1.6 million to establish this service from the start of the 2011 school year, ensuring 22 young children are now enjoying going to kindy with a qualified teacher.

Later this week we will open the new kindergarten service at Slade Point State School. The centre opened its doors to the first group of children in late March and the second group started last week. This service was established by the state government at a cost of \$730,000 and is being operated by the experienced and reputable C&K—a valued partner of the Queensland government in providing universal kindergarten access.

The services at Seaforth and Slade Point are among 10 new services already announced for the Mackay region. The other services are: the service at Beaconsfield State School, which opened in August last year; a number of services which will open in 2012 at Eimeo Road, Marian, Sarina and Mackay North state schools and Mackay Christian College; and a new service at Emmanuel Catholic College, which is scheduled to open in 2013.

I also use this opportunity to remind the chamber that the state government announced \$22 million in further funding earlier this month to establish 24 kindergarten services on Catholic and independent school sites across Queensland in 2013. The Bligh government is well on the way to achieving our commitment of universal access to kindergarten for all Queensland children by 2014.

While I am on my feet I would also like to say a few words about a fire that occurred overnight at Lowood State High School in the Brisbane Valley, in the electorate of the member for Ipswich West. The good news is that, although there was significant damage to parts of the administration block, the school is open for business this morning. Everyone, including the school principal, teachers and staff, emergency services and QBuild, is working hard to minimise the disruption to students, particularly year 12 students who are approaching the end of a very important semester.

Fires in schools can be quite devastating, but I am sure that the school staff and the community will recover from this setback. Both the member for Ipswich West, Wayne Wendt, and I have spoken to the principal of the school, Mr Wayne Webster, this morning. I know that the member for Ipswich West is greatly concerned by the fire, but can I assure him, Mr Webster and everyone associated with Lowood State High School that they have the full support of the government in getting the school back on its feet as soon as possible.