



Speech by


Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Tuesday, 14 June 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education Reform

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.02 am): Last week I had the pleasure of joining the Premier to announce the next stage of Labor's reforms for education in this state. The Labor Party has always been the party of reform, and there is no clearer example of our reform vision than in the education system. We want Queensland students to receive the best possible education so that they have every opportunity to succeed in life. The Premier has already outlined in some detail the government's plan for year 7 to join high school in 2015. The benefits of this move will be substantial for our children, who represent the future of this great state. The government has developed a comprehensive package of programs to support the transition of year 7 into high school.

I assure parents that year 7 students attending state schools from 2015 will be well supported through pastoral care programs as they make the move to high school. To help achieve this, amongst other things we will introduce junior secondary into Queensland state high schools—a school within a school. Junior secondary will have its own distinct identity and cater for the specific academic and developmental needs of students in years 8 and 9 from 2013, with year 7 joining in 2015. Year 7 students will be eased into high school life with fewer subjects and teachers than higher grades, but at the same time they will be able to take advantage of the educational opportunities that high schools can offer.

We want students in rural and remote areas to have the same opportunities as their city counterparts, but we recognise that their families face additional challenges due to distance. To help support them, we will increase the living-away-from-home allowance for year 7 students to the secondary school rate, conduct a comprehensive review of the educational needs of geographically isolated students and the services offered to them and, with the Catholic and independent school sectors, establish a cross-sectoral task force to examine the financial implications of the change on boarding schools.

Also, I assure state school teachers that no permanent staff will lose their job or be forced to relocate as a result of this important initiative. Those wishing to make the move to junior secondary will have access to professional development programs. The government will also fund up to 500 scholarships for those primary school teachers looking for the challenge of teaching in a secondary school setting. Principal pay scales are also guaranteed for three years from 2015. This government acknowledges the importance of teachers and principals in educating our children. In implementing this important change, we pledge to continue to work closely with the Queensland Teachers Union and principals to make this transition as smooth as possible. Between now and 2015 there is much to be done to get high schools ready for year 7 students to join them, and we are committed to getting on with the job.

This initiative is backed by significant financial resources to ensure the transition is successful—just as we did when we implemented prep in recent years. Over the next four years the government will allocate \$328.2 million in extra capital funding for state schools. This will pay for more than 1,400 new and refurbished classrooms and learning areas in state high schools. Also, the government will provide an extra \$293.8 million in recurrent funding over forward estimates to implement the suite of initiatives outlined in the Flying Start white paper. This includes \$81.3 million for capital assistance to the non-state-

school sector. In total, the government has allocated \$622 million over the forward estimates. We believe this is a generous and sufficient allocation.

The government acknowledges that further funding will be required beyond the forward estimates period to fully implement the Flying Start initiatives. This is expected to total a further \$268 million up to 2017-18. From 2018-19 onwards, about \$70 million a year in additional funding for year 7 in high school will be required. This investment reflects our view that the best investment a government can make is in the education of its young people. Through this latest initiative, the Bligh government is ensuring Queensland students can get a flying start to learning and to life.