



Speech by


Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Wednesday, 12 October 2011

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kindergarten, Teacher Training

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (2.15 pm): Research tells us that the first six years of a child's life are critical to their brain development and learning potential. In response, the Queensland government is investing heavily to ensure Queensland children have universal access to early childhood education. To meet our commitment, we need the teachers to deliver kindergarten programs. That is why we have offered 235 scholarships for early childhood staff to upgrade their qualifications. Today, I can announce that there will be an extra 100 scholarships available for early childhood staff who hold advanced diplomas to upgrade their qualifications so they can teach in kindergarten. Applications for these scholarships close on 11 November 2011 for studies commencing in Semester 1, 2012.

On top of this, I am pleased to announce that applications are also open for a new program providing financial incentives to teachers who move to a regional area to deliver kindergarten programs. Under the program, scholarships of \$12,000 over two years are available to early childhood teachers who relocate to remote and regional communities. Queensland is a huge state with a dispersed population and this program is about ensuring all children have the same opportunities.

Finally, another way we are delivering on our commitment to rural and remote communities is by increasing funding for kindergartens in these areas. Today I can announce an increase of \$179,000 in annual funding to help 44 rural kindergartens deliver quality early childhood education programs. The Bligh government understands there are a number of challenges to delivering kindy programs in rural and remote locations and, although they operate part time, many still face similar expenses to full-time services. This increase in annual funding will underpin the viability of smaller services and help them to manage annual enrolment fluctuations.

We are changing the way Queenslanders think about early childhood education and we are changing the way it is delivered. These are visionary reforms that will reap benefits for Queensland for decades to come and will ensure we have a bright future.