



Speech by


Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Tuesday, 14 February 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Greenslopes—ALP) (Minister for Education and Industrial Relations) (10.01 am): Educated and skilled workers are the backbone of a modern, vibrant economy, which is what we have here in Queensland. Queenslanders with better skills and more knowledge help increase productivity, creating a stronger economy and a better future for our state. That is why Labor has placed such an emphasis on education and training over the past decade. It was Labor that introduced the ground-breaking learning-or-earning laws in the early 2000s. It was Labor that raised the school leaving rate, sending a strong message that we place a high value on education. And it is Labor that is lifting the number of students completing Year 12.

Last year, more than 47,200 students completed Year 12, with 26,810 receiving a tertiary entrance statement. Just last month, the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre made first-round offers of places in tertiary institutions to 2011 school leavers. Preliminary data indicates that the number of students applying to QTAC has increased by about 1,067 students, due to the growing proportion of Queensland students completing Year 12. These students are the doctors, nurses, engineers and teachers of the future. They have been prepared for tertiary study by the high-quality instruction they received through Queensland's education system.

Education itself contributes substantially to the economy. The Department of Education and Training employs more than 70,000 staff, including teachers, teacher aides, cleaners and grounds people, and has a weekly wages bill of about \$160 million. Education services are a major earner for the Queensland economy, generating export income of \$2.473 billion in 2010-11. The Bligh government has also outlined a bold new future for education in this state with the proposal to establish the Queensland Education Trust. The trust will give Queensland students an advantage over children in other states and create a legacy that will enhance our education system for decades to come.