




Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Wednesday, 20 June 2012

GORDONVALE SCHOOLS, EXCELSIOR PROGRAM

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (11.35 pm): Late last month I had the pleasure of attending the project presentation evening for 'Excelsior: A Whole of Community Approach to Sustainability'. An innovative curriculum program, Excelsior has been initiated by Gordonvale State School to create a culture of environmental sustainability within the school and local community with an emphasis on long-term behavioural change. I was impressed to see the students present their projects identifying sustainability issues in their local environment relating to a number of areas including local water use; ecosystems and biodiversity; resources, products, waste and pollution, including food; built environments, travel and transport; and energy.

Students from Gordonvale State School, Gordonvale State High School and Alooomba State School are involved in the program. In working on real-life projects, students investigate strategies to reduce the ecological footprint of the local community—for example, research on native tree species to see which species absorbs more carbon than others and investigating innovative ways to encourage school communities to use modes of travel that have less impact on the environment.

I want to congratulate organising teachers Sandra Charlton and Helen Underwood and thank those people who volunteered their time to be on the expert panels. I know the students really appreciated the constructive and very positive feedback. On the night I could not decide which of the projects by students was the best. There were so many that they were done in two groups to get through them all—one group delivering projects at one end of the hall and others down the opposite end.

These kids did so much work in developing their projects to create a sustainable future. I want to congratulate the students involved: Nathanael Honnef, Lucy Peterson, Satria Curmi, Amy Holzhauser, Finley Sherwood, Ashton Norman, Luke Azzopardi, Jenna Noonan, Amy Morris, Abbey Smart, Meg Peterson, Jake Melville, Billy Godwin, Summer Wiley, Brianna Toovey, Kate Charlton, Kayla Brown-Gorry, Isaac Marshall, Samantha Martin, Nathaniel Bishop, Kirra Georgeson, Louka Devogel, Sam Brayshaw, Maddison Hanigan, Angela Ebner, Soraya Houghton, Teah Addison, Jordan Collett, Rahni Rahni-May Hill, Nicole Hislop, Regan Lane, Felicity Pearmine, Alannah Martin, and Kelsie Gammie.

The next generation is making us proud and is not scared to tackle these environmental issues that might not have an easy solution. As one of the panel members put it, it is this next generation that we need to think laterally to fix the problems that my generation and those before us have caused. Well done to all the students, teachers and parents involved. Gordonvale State School, Gordonvale State High School and Alooomba State School are terrific local schools. I look forward to the next project from these schools. Essentially, they are the hub of sustainability in Far North Queensland education.