




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 26 August 2014

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Education, Funding

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (9.50 am): This government has always been about delivering for the next generation of Queenslanders. Our commitment to fiscal discipline is made with two key thoughts in mind: firstly, not leaving a legacy of debt and deficits for our children and grandchildren to deal with; and, secondly, ensuring that we can sustainably deliver the services that our community needs. Because of the actions taken by this government, debt this year is going to be more than \$5 billion less than was predicted by the last Labor government. We have also outlined a plan to deal with Labor's debt and to build the infrastructure and deliver the services—the schools and the hospitals—that a growing state like Queensland needs.

Our commitment to the next generation of Queenslanders can particularly be seen in the investments we are making in education across the state. I was very proud to announce in June that the education budget has increased by seven per cent to \$11.8 billion in 2014-15. This was in addition to a 6.6 per cent increase in the 2013-14 budget.

Of course, this government's focus lies on outcomes. That is why we are directing funding to programs that will deliver results for young Queenslanders. We are investing \$537 million over five years to ensure professional excellence in teaching through Great Teachers = Great Results. Our Great Results Guarantee, as the Premier has said, is a \$131 million commitment aimed at lifting student outcomes and ensuring that Queensland is among the top performing states in literacy and numeracy in Australia by 2020.

We are also making sure that classrooms in the areas of greatest need have access to teacher aides through our four-year \$53.6 million Boosting Prep for our Children's Future commitment. By 2015-16 this program will support up to 9,000 extra teacher aide hours a week.

Not only does this government want students to have access to the best teaching resources, we also want them to have pride in their schools as places of learning. The previous Labor government let our schools fall into a state of disrepair. This government is getting on with the job of fixing this problem, with a \$300 million commitment to address the school maintenance backlog.

We are also planning for future growth in our education system. This year's budget included a further \$23 million to construct a new high school at Highfields in Toowoomba North, which will be open for students in 2015. The government has also committed \$1.4 billion to build 10 new schools in high growth areas in Queensland, under the Queensland Schools Project public-private partnership. The first schools in Burpengary and Pimpama are set to commence in 2015.

This government is committed to education and providing opportunities for young Queenslanders. We are doing it by investing in major education programs now, and we are doing it by planning carefully and methodically for future growth. Over the next 20 years it is estimated that the school aged population in Queensland will grow by 400,000. Only the LNP government has a plan to provide for this future growth and to provide more education opportunities for all Queenslanders.