



Speech By  
**Aaron Harper**


**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Thuringowa State High School**

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.50 am): I would like to share with the House a great experience I had when attending the Thuringowa State High School awards and graduation night held at a sold-out Townsville Civic Theatre on Monday, 2 November this year. It was good timing as I had literally just left the first Advancing Education information and consultation forum at Kirwan State High School, a very well-attended and informative event.

It has become very apparent through my various positive interactions with Thuringowa State High school this year that we have an outstanding education facility that is leading the way not only in terms of student outcomes but also very much in the space of Advancing Education. Thuringowa State High School was established in 1987 and is a year 7-12 secondary school situated in the Upper Ross suburb of Condon and including in its catchment area the suburbs of Rasmussen, Kelso and Douglas. The school has been growing in numbers and now has an enrolment of just under 700. The school has 35 per cent Indigenous students, 10 per cent students with disabilities and many families with a low socio-economic background. Under the exceptional leadership of Principal Mr Grant Dale, Thuringowa State High School encourages strong community connections with a community Anzac Day commemoration, NAIDOC Day celebration and an outstanding theatre restaurant, which is now 27 years strong.

In 2014, two students from Thuringowa State High School achieved OP 1s and over 90 per cent of the Year 12s achieved a Queensland Certificate of Education or Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement. In June, the honourable minister, Kate Jones, announced the opening of consultations regarding a strong partnership between James Cook University and the Department of Education and Training in the North Queensland region. It was a timely announcement with the recent release of the *Advancing education: an action plan for education in Queensland* and *#codingcounts*. Thuringowa and James Cook University are currently working together to develop a program of study that will create experiences for students which connect, inspire and develop aspiration for further education aligned with the strategic intent of both parties, that is, linking STEM subjects—science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects—as well as the digital technologies whilst shaping education for the global tropics future. The program is not only targeted to maximise the potential of gifted and capable students but also about strengthening outcomes for Indigenous students and those from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is about bringing like-minded students together.

Whilst in this initial stage, the project has been referred to as the global tropics future young scholars program. The longitudinal focus of the initiative will be across students in years 5 to 12. However, the initial key focus and mobilisation of the partners in this project will be on engaging students in years 5 to 9. A key partner of this program will be the Queensland Academies' Young Scholars Program, which will provide a template for the establishment of delivery, both face-to-face and virtual,

across the North Queensland region. The model, which has been established by the Queensland Academies with associated universities in the south-east corner, has proved quite successful. In collaboration with James Cook University, we have the opportunity to link with state schools in Northern Queensland, through Thuringowa State High School, to provide challenging enrichment opportunities for highly capable year 5 to 9 students, with an emphasis on the targeted groups. Furthermore, this project will utilise the successful outreach program as a template for further development in our region.

Whilst this project is very much in its infancy, on 25 November, Thuringowa State High School provided mentors from year 9 for 30 year 5 and 6 students from Weir, Kelso and Rasmussen schools, who attended the unique interactive workshop that introduced students to the global tropics future young scholars program, which is currently being developed in collaboration with James Cook University. Furthermore, these students would become ongoing participants in the Queensland Academies' community and program offerings—online and workshops—and the foundation students of the project version of this outreach program.

I thank Thuringowa State High School for the invitation to attend their graduation and congratulate all award recipients and those who are graduating from their senior year. This is an outstanding school which is to be commended, and is certainly in step with our Queensland Advancing Education policy.