




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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ADJOURNMENT

Advance Queensland Education Forum

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.08 pm): In today's fast paced and ever-changing world, supporting students to be successful learners has become more important than ever before. That is why I was so honoured to be part of the Advance Queensland education forum held in Mackay on 23 September. Over 40 local educators and students from state and private schools as well as the Central Queensland University attended the forum to discuss how we can expand coding and robotics to support every student to be a successful digital learner. Our young people need to be ready to meet the demands of new industries, changing technologies and global innovation. The forum discussed the Advancing Education plan, highlighting the importance of providing learning opportunities in future focused areas. It also discussed a range of actions to provide students with high-level skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The implementation of the digital technologies curriculum in state schools from 2016 is an exciting development and a significant step in the preparation of our students to succeed in the workforce in the future. This curriculum will include the establishment of a coding academy and the development of virtual science, technology, engineering and mathematics academies for students in years 5 to 9. Teachers and principals will be supported through professional development, scholarships and mentoring by STEM champions.

Coding and robotics are part of a set of skills we want all Queensland students to possess. Educators in Mackay acknowledge the importance of the Advancing Education initiative, which will give students the opportunity to study languages from prep in state schools, with more students studying Asian languages and culture. Of course, literacy and numeracy are the foundations of learning and remain a critical priority for every child in Queensland. It was gratifying for me to hear feedback and receive input from dedicated educators in my electorate who will play a pivotal role in the implementation of Advancing Education strategies and preparing the young people in our communities to be the workforce and leaders of the future. We want to build expertise across the teaching workforce so our students have access to the most up-to-date skills and knowledge. Key to the success of these strategies is the feedback provided from those who are on the front line of education. I was encouraged to hear from those from Mackay's education community and I know they fully support Advancing Education. As a former teacher I understand from firsthand experience that education is the foundation of a strong economy and a vibrant community.