



Speech By
Ian Walker

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mackenzie State Special School



Mr WALKER (Mansfield—LNP) (2.34 pm): I wish to take the opportunity to speak about two schools in my electorate that share a common campus on Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road. Mackenzie State Primary and Special School was formed from two schools. The original state school that was on the site, the Mount Petrie State School—I see the member for Capalaba nodding; I am sure he has been past it many a time—was a lovely typical Queensland school building that had seen better days in respect of its ability to satisfactorily educate the children in my electorate. The other school that went to the site was the Mount Gravatt Special School that had existed in Newnham Road at Mount Gravatt and had for many years served the community in providing education for those with special needs.

The school was developed during the time of the Bligh government but completed during the time of the LNP government. My colleague the member for Surfers Paradise, who was then education minister, had the privilege of opening the school. I have attended it many times since. It is an interesting concept to have a state school campus and a special school campus co-located. The state school presently has about 80 students and its maximum number is about 120 students. It co-locates with the special school attended by those children who require special needs attention during their education. The co-location serves a tremendous purpose. Firstly, it enables families who have a child in the normal state stream and another child who is educated in the special stream to go to the same campus. They can effectively be dropped off at the same school and go to their separate parts of the campus for their education. I am sure there are many families that welcome being able to have their children attend one campus where their needs are specially catered for.

The state primary school side of the campus is under the principalship of Mr Jonathan Gagen who has been at the school for about a year now and has provided tremendous leadership. Last week I was very pleased to present awards to the year 6 leaders who I am sure will do a sterling job. I then popped across to the special school which is under the principalship of Mr Terry Forster. Terry has had a long and impressive history in special needs education in this state and he does an absolutely spectacular job at this campus. One of the interesting things that they do on campus, and I was pleased to take part in it, is a coffee shop on a Wednesday morning in which the children who attend the special school actually do all of the catering for those who attend. I was pleased to have an iced chocolate mixed up by Oscar, one of the students of the school, who follows a clear guideline as to how he is to make the drink and then serve it to customers. Courtney had a tremendous zucchini slice that was keenly devoured by the parents and community members who attended the coffee shop. It is a great experience to go there. It provides tremendous training for the special school students and it also provides a great community facility for those who want to go and get a nice coffee and something to

eat. Unsurprisingly, it is attended by the parents who use it as a tremendous opportunity to socialise and, in fact, to talk to the school administration about matters of concern. I am very pleased to commend what the school is doing.

I was also pleased to assist the school in its negotiations with Kath Coory. Kath is from BestLife Foundation sleepovers. Kath, who has a child who attends the school, is particularly concerned that those who have children who are being educated in the special system have a place where they can learn to interact with other kids on something as simple as weekend sleepovers. The facilities at the school are suitable to take a number of children on a weekend sleepover basis. I am glad that the administration of Mackenzie State Special School and the BestLife Foundation management were able to come to an agreement that allows BestLife to use the campus on weekends. Parents happily drop their kids off on a Saturday knowing that they will be safely looked after and are able to interact with each other in that sort of environment to get to experience what for most of our children is an ordinary part of growing up.