




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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EDUCATION (ACCREDITATION OF NON-STATE SCHOOLS) BILL

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.37 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill. I think it is fair to say that all of us here in this chamber—indeed, all of us across the state of Queensland—appreciate the importance of education. I suspect all of us are here because at some point in our lives we have had strong educational input into who we are, into our knowledge, into our learning, into shaping what we have become.

I reflect that during the LNP's term in government we undertook the Queensland Plan. Quite surprisingly, what came out strongest during that consultation with all of Queensland was the importance of education. It was not so much the traditional educational models, national curriculums and so on. The people who engaged in that process identified that education is so vital to our future and our kids' future in terms of preparing them for a flexible, changing, dynamic world—a world where the jobs they will be undertaking have not even been invented yet. What came through very strongly was that we need to try to teach them more general skills of being able to adapt, to learn quickly, to watch technological change and to move with that.

I think that is why in a state like Queensland and a nation like Australia we do want choice when it comes to our educational basis. No two kids necessarily learn the same. Every kid has different ways of receiving input and turning that input into opportunity. It is vital to have an education system that is based on state schools, non-state schools, distance education, homeschooling, skills trade training centres, technical colleges, universities and on-the-job experience because we need to be tapping our children as appropriate into each and every one of those.

Throughout the course of the eight-plus years that I have been the member for Glass House I have been extraordinarily fortunate to represent 18 schools. Thirteen of those schools are state primary schools, one is a P-10 at Woodford, one is a state high school at Maleny and there are three non-state schools in my electorate. There is the Ananda Marga River School in Maleny, the Caboolture Montessori School just north of Caboolture and the Australian Christian College, Moreton also in Caboolture. I have two non-state schools right on the boundary of the electorate of Glass House: Glasshouse Christian College at Beerwah and also my alma mater, Grace Lutheran College; their Caboolture campus is just across the road from the boundary of the electorate of Glass House.

It has been my real privilege to be engaged in each of those school communities over the course of eight years. Unfortunately, with the redistribution and the changes to those boundaries should I have the honour of representing Glass House after the next state election, I will lose two of those schools and I will lose the immediacy of two more of those schools. I will literally be representing only one non-state school across the entire electorate of Glass House, which will be the Ananda Marga River School. I want to spend a moment reflecting on those other four schools and the great work that they do.

The first one is the Caboolture Montessori School. Had standing orders allowed me, I would have worn my friends of Caboolture Montessori School T-shirt into the chamber today. I am a huge fan of

that school; they are a fantastic pocket rocket of a school ably led by Yvonne Rinaldi. My connection goes right back. On one of my first visits they raised with me concerns about some eucalypt trees on the school property. The term was used—and we use it very widely—widow makers. We could foresee limbs from these trees falling on the kids. We got together a group of young people to come in and help that school drop those trees and remove them from the precinct. Every time I go back and look at their soccer field and play equipment I recall that that has only been possible due to that first interaction we had with Yvonne and the Caboolture Montessori School.

I go back there regularly, whether it is when they install their chook pen, they open a new building or to speak to the kids in one of the cycles. They are such an engaging group of kids. Seriously, addressing the kids at Caboolture Montessori School is harder than question time as a minister. They are so switched on, so engaged and so aware of the broader context of the lives that they are living. They really have a great time asking adults tough questions. To Yvonne Rinaldi I say that it has been truly a great honour to represent the Caboolture Montessori School. I do look forward to introducing her to Simone Wilson, our cracker candidate for the seat of Pumicestone as that school will fall within the boundaries of that electorate after the next state election. I know Simone will continue to represent them in the same passionate way that I have.

The other school is the Australian Christian College, Moreton based at Caboolture. I want to acknowledge Gary Underwood, the principal there, and the great work he has done in reshaping that school. It started with a very small day school component but a very large distance education component. That day school has now grown and grown. I reflect back to April this year when I was privileged to be at the opening of their new \$3 million building. I would love to table this article because if honourable members see what this school looks like it will blow their minds.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Caboolture Shire Herald*, dated 20 April 2017, titled 'Australian Christian College Caboolture unveils new \$3 million building with high glass walls and polished concrete floors' [\[1299\]](#).

I have never seen a school look like this before in my life. It is like an office building. It is all open plan with glass from floor to ceiling. It is two storeys and has 11 classrooms and a cafeteria. It is absolutely amazing and a real testament to what many of the non-state schools can do with a relatively small amount of money to provide educational facilities for our kids. I was there at that opening with school captains, Leah Pavey, Arien Gill, Elizabeth Forster and Joshua Gale. It was fantastic to see that school go from strength to strength. I will let honourable members in on a little secret. Despite that school moving out of the boundaries of my electorate, my connection will continue as my daughter is currently enrolled at that school, so we will continue to be close friends of that school community.

I now turn to the two schools that are currently on the border but will shift to being a bit further away. There is Glasshouse Christian College, another fantastic institution in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. Mike Curtis has done a stellar job of growing this school to the point where it has become one of the pre-eminent educational institutions on the Sunshine Coast. The kids that we meet there are so mature, so well rounded and so engaged. That is not surprising when we see what they do on the campus and the activities they take part in. It is always a privilege to be there at their awards night each and every year, whether it is watching the youngest preppies all the way through to the year 12 graduates. What is scary is that I recall going to some of the earlier awards nights at Glasshouse Christian College and students who were then in year 4 have since graduated and gone on to university. I now see them around the community, so I have clearly been in this job far too long!

Ms Davis interjected.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Aspley. We will keep going.

I say all the best to Mike and his community. I will continue to stay connected with Glasshouse Christian College as a number of students from the Glass House electorate will continue to tap into that school.

Finally, I mention my old school, Grace Lutheran College. After I left the Rothwell campus they opened up a Caboolture campus. Earlier this year the new principal at Grace Lutheran College, David Radke, and the new head of campus, Warren Irvine, again invited me to their leadership inauguration ceremony. I love meeting the school captains there. This year they are Madison, Sabah, Lucilla and Patrick. I reflect on the fact that back in 1991 I was school captain at Grace Lutheran College. That kind of blows these kids' mind a little bit that someone as old as me can claim some heritage with Grace Lutheran College. They, too, will be moving electorates after the next election, but obviously I will maintain a link to them as an alumni of that fine institution. I wish them all the best. I wish all of the non-state schools in Moreton and the Sunshine Coast hinterland all the best towards the end of this

academic year and into the next academic year. I am pleased that there is a level of bipartisan support for this bill this afternoon. I commend the bill to the House.