



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 May 2020

## ADJOURNMENT

### Condamine Electorate, Secondary Schools

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (7.30 pm): Students in the fast-growing Westbrook area in the Condamine electorate are not able to access their secondary education requirements in close proximity to where they live. Families in and around Westbrook are being compelled to send their children into Toowoomba for secondary schooling. Harristown State High School and Centenary Heights State High School are very close to—or are already—over capacity and there are fears these additional students are being forgotten in an already overcrowded education system.

Census data shows that the Westbrook-Drayton area had a collective population of 3,861 in 2011. In 2016 the listed population had grown to 4,505, a population increase of 14 per cent in five years. The Queensland Education website states that Centenary Heights State High School has an enrolment capacity of 1,560 while Harristown has a capacity of 1,703. In 2011, 1,192 students were enrolled at Centenary Heights and 1,477 at Harristown. In 2016 the enrolments at Centenary Heights increased to 1,569 and 1,652 at Harristown, demonstrating both schools have experienced significant growth.

Queensland Treasury's Office of Economic and Statistical Research stated that in 2018 the Toowoomba local government catchment, which includes the Westbrook area, had a population of 164,595, with a projected figure of 204,300 by 2041. This is an increase of over 19 per cent to the population in the region, and much of this growth can be attributed to the western corridor.

The local community is advocating for a secondary school to be part of this growth. These families would like to see their children easily able to access secondary education without the need to travel back and forth to Toowoomba on an already busy highway. A proposed development in the area, the Fernleigh Westbrook development, is now in the hands of the Toowoomba Regional Council. The development would include 1,500 residential lots, a large shopping centre, a major supermarket and specialty retail shops, a tavern, childcare centre, aquatic centre, community facilities, parklands and cycleways. This will only add to the population growth in the area. Right now with the turmoil and pressure that COVID-19 has placed on our economy, we need infrastructure projects like the Fernleigh development to be approved and construction started.

Likewise, the Palaszczuk government needs to procure land for a secondary school in the western Toowoomba corridor without further delay, firstly, to safeguard the educational future of students and, secondly, to ensure Queensland has infrastructure projects going forward to secure and strengthen our economy.