




Speech By
Samuel O'Connor

MEMBER FOR BONNEY

Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2021

ADJOURNMENT

Labrador State School, 100th Anniversary

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.08 pm): More people live in Labrador than in any other part of my electorate. It is one of the oldest and proudest parts of the Gold Coast—named not after a breed of dog but by one of our first European settlers, Robert Muir. He was a Scottish engineer who had sailed past the Labrador Peninsula in Canada. When he bought 139 acres north of Southport in 1878 that today makes up our suburb, the Broadwater reminded him of those estuaries on the other side of the world.

Tonight I pay tribute to a place that is a heart of that community, Labrador State School, because this year it celebrates its 100th birthday. We have come so far in that time. When the school opened in 1921 it had just 17 students and one teacher in a single building. In 2021, Labrador has 768 students with 85 teachers, teacher aides, admin staff, cleaners and a groundsman, all ably lead by Principal Stephen Josey and his team.

The school is not even in the same place it was a century ago. It actually used to be on Billington Street and the Gold Coast Highway, where the council's Labrador Community Hub now sits. The selflessness of local people is engrained in this school. We can still see it in the incredible P&C volunteers a century later. It is the reason we have our hall and our swimming pool, and the very existence of our school is because of the efforts of locals.

The school started with a group of Labradorians meeting on a Friday night at Peter Kropp's house on 5 September 1919. They were worried that a quarter of the children in the area did not go to school at all because the closest school to them was Southport State School, four kilometres away, which is quite a journey on foot. They then had to hold working bees to clear the land themselves—not an easy task because the school site, like most of the Gold Coast, was essentially a swamp. The grounds of that first site were barely dry for more than a few days a year. The kids would regularly get colds, boils and sores, and they would even catch freshwater yabbies in the back corner of the schoolyard. It would stay on that site for another three decades.

The school that we all know and love today opened on the land bounded by Imperial Parade, Turpin Road and Gordon Street in 1952 with around 200 students and, thankfully, it is on much higher ground. Thank you to everyone who has helped celebrate this centenary through the heritage walkway, the year 6 designed mural, the reunion at Southport Sharks and this badge which every student and staff member received and which I was proud to sponsor. Whether you are one of the first families of our area or one of the new arrivals who make up our modern multicultural community, thank you for making this school so special. As your very proud local MP, happy 100th birthday Labrador State School.