




Speech By
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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Mount Ommaney Electorate, Schools; Cost-of-Living Rebate

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (8.29 pm): I rise today to update the House on the significant infrastructure investments in my local state schools. I start with the mighty Mount Ommaney Special School. A few years ago I opened a brand new, state-of-the-art learning facility with Minister Grace, and it is absolutely beautiful. Now I am pleased to share that we will be creating more learning spaces in the undercroft of this building to create even more capacity at this fantastic local school. But wait, there is more.

Early next year, the education minister and I will also formally open the new performing arts space at Centenary State High School. I was lucky enough to get a sneak peek at the facility last week. It is a great facility. The students are already using it a bit—students like my daughter, Allegra, who started at Centenary State High School this year. It makes me so proud as the local member that our kids—my kids and your kids—get to learn in a space like this that we have built for them as a government.

I also put on the record my thanks to the student forum, which is the student council body at the school. They asked for my feedback earlier this year on some of their ideas for the community gambling grant that they were putting together as a student group to propose to the P&C. They decided as a committee to put in a proposal for a shade sail for the students to eat their lunch under, and I am delighted to inform the House that their application was successful. These students are not even out of high school and they are already applying for grants for their school. It just goes to show that you are never too young to make a positive difference in your community. I commend their enthusiasm.

In a similar vein, the student leaders at Corinda State High School, Michaela and JJ, the current school captains, were tireless advocates for the upgrade of the school STEM labs. They worked with the P&C on a recent petition which I sponsored. They did a wonderful job promoting it to the student community and I was so happy when the petition was tabled a few sitting weeks ago. We have already secured the funding. The whole school community, including the P&C and the teachers, advocated for the importance of providing state-of-the-art STEM buildings for this fantastic school. They have a STEM excellence program so it is easy to understand why they need the best possible facility to ensure their students get the best possible learning outcomes. I can today update the House that planning works for the building are continuing apace, with demolition planned for the existing block next year and building to start after that.

I now turn to the mighty Darra State School. Darra will be getting a total of \$11 million for additional classrooms, which is hugely exciting for this growing school. Darra State School is the smallest school in my electorate but it is growing quickly. When I was elected about five years ago, they had fewer than 200 students. Now thanks to the hard work of the P&C and the school staff that number is sitting at around 250 and it is growing all the time. This building will enable growth of up to approximately 450 students. This is not just a building; it is a legacy project that will allow this fantastic school to grow into its next phase and welcome lots more students.

Darra is a suburb that is up and coming. It has lots of young families moving in and they want to send their kids to a great local state school. This is huge game-changing news for the Darra community and it is a wonderful investment for the future of the school and the whole community. Members may be interested to know that Darra State School is one of the oldest schools in my community. I would hazard a guess that it could actually be one of the oldest in Queensland. It was founded in 1916. The new build will include new classrooms and new music rooms.

In the time I have left, I want to remind Queenslanders to check their power bills. I received mine recently. As we are coming into Christmas, I was pleased to see the \$175 rebate on the back. Here in Queensland we own our assets and therefore Queenslanders can receive that dividend. We have kept our assets in public hands. I know that families in my community and right across Queensland are doing it tough and are watching every dollar, so \$175 off a power bill coming into Christmas will make a big difference. I ask people to take a moment when they get their power bill to check that the \$175 rebate is on the back. That is our early Christmas gift to Queenslanders to make sure they have a little bit extra to spend and have a merry Christmas.