



Speech By
Michael Berkman

MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

Record of Proceedings, 17 March 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Maiwar Electorate, Primary School

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.49 pm): I rise to address plans for a much needed new primary school in the inner west, which the state government is proposing to build at the old Toowong Bowls Club next to Perrin Park. It is clearer than ever that the site goes under in major floods—we already knew this—and the adjacent road at Heroes Avenue floods much more easily, cutting off one of two possible road access points. I stopped past the site on the Saturday before the flood peak and a few times since to see the damage for myself. It really was shocking to see and smell the impacts, and particularly at Perrin Park, which sits lower than the bowls club.

I am as worried as others are about building in a flood zone and I am genuinely disappointed that the state government did not plan ahead and acquire privately owned land rather than using scarce public land for the new school. I have consistently expressed this in meetings with the minister, with the project team, through the public consultation and in two written submissions, which I table.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 February 2021, from the member for Maiwar, Mr Michael Berkman MP, to Building Future Schools regarding a new school in the inner west of Brisbane [321](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 30 June 2021, from the member for Maiwar, Mr Michael Berkman MP to Building Future Schools regarding a primary school for Maiwar—second round of consultation [322](#).

I have raised my concerns again since the flooding. It is clear that neither the Toowong Bowls Club site nor the Indooroopilly State High School campus is ideal. The department's decision is not something I can control. Even if they could be persuaded to change location now, that decision would be at the expense of students and teachers at Indooroopilly, Ironside and Toowong state schools, which have been bursting at the seams. I know there are some locals who continue to oppose the department's decision. I understand their concerns and I respect their position.

My role now must be to fight for the best possible outcome for the community, in light of the decision, just as I was ready to do if the department had chosen the Indooroopilly State High School site. This means making sure—as the department has proposed from the start—that the building design provides the best possible flood immunity, similar to the new building at Milton State School that stood up so well during the recent floods. It means ensuring the necessary upgrades for Heroes Avenue and safe road and pedestrian access from Gailey Road. It means ensuring design and construction is sensitive to the surrounding ecology and making sure the community is not left with less public green space.

On the issue of green space, we all know that this is a council responsibility and council is far better positioned to deliver new green space with the compensation it is entitled to, on top of the high rates base of these areas and the infrastructure charges paid by developers. Instead, the Lord Mayor and the local LNP Councillor James Mackay have tried to pretend that council might not be entitled to compensation for the state acquisition of the bowls club. Both the federal LNP member, former councillor Julian Simmonds and Councillor Mackay refuse to support any location for the new school.

Councillor Mackay says he has proposed an alternative, but when asked in council he was unwilling to even name the proposal that he has put up as the alternative because it caused such a backlash with the QASMT school community, who he proposed to move from their newly refurbished and expanded campus. I am sincerely hoping all players on the west side can start acting a bit more like grown-ups and collaborating in the best interests of our area.