




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Yarranlea Primary School

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.16 pm): Tonight I would like to thank the member for Mansfield for allowing me to speak about the Yarranlea Primary School—a school in her electorate but where I believe children from my electorate attend. I should also acknowledge that the member for Stretton's son, Oliver, attends that school. I understand from speaking to the member for Stretton that Oliver loves the fact that the school has four lunchbreaks rather than three.

I need to speak a little about the school and its origins. Yarranlea is a small town west of Pittsworth on the Darling Downs. In 2016 the population of Yarranlea was 90 people so it is not a town many people would know. Members might wonder what the significance of this is. A few weeks ago I met with Adrienne Innes who shared with me the fascinating history of the Yarranlea Primary School building. Yarranlea Primary School began life in 1883 when it opened as the Hermitage Provisional School at Yarranlea. In 1888 a new school building was constructed. It was funded, in part, by the local community with the remainder funded by the state. The school comprised a one-room building that was almost matched in size by the school verandah.

While the building was originally intended to house 25 students, at times the school accommodated over 50 students. It was in 1900 that the school name was officially changed to Yarranlea State School and it continued to provide an education for students from the local community until 1977 when the school was closed. That was not the end of the building.

In 1979 the whole building, including even the school gates, historic items and archives, were trucked over 180 kilometres to its new home at the Mount Gravatt campus where it was restored. The school started a new life as a museum display school until it caught the eye of Geoff Orr, an academic who taught a subject called small school leadership. Mr Orr saw an opportunity for pre-service teachers to gain valuable experience of the challenges teachers could face at one-teacher schools. His vision was realised when Education Queensland and Griffith University formed a partnership and in 1987 Yarranlea State School once more opened its doors to students. Class began in the historic building with the class size capped at 18 students. In 2004 the school community lobbied to have the building protected for future generations.