




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Ripley Central State School

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.21 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, 23 January was not just my beloved brother's birthday; it was also the opening of the brand new Ripley Central State School in my electorate. It is the third state school the Palaszczuk government has built in the Ripley Valley since 2020, and we plan to build more to keep up with high numbers of people moving to the area. I want to acknowledge the Minister for Education, who is in the chamber, who I know has played a pivotal role in this.

I want to acknowledge the foundation principal of Ripley Central State School, Wuanita Meyrick, and offer her my best wishes in her new leadership role. Wuanita has been a champion for the school since it was announced in 2021. She has led numerous meetings and consultations with the community to help shape the school in a way that best fits the community's expectations. Having known Wuanita from her time as principal at another primary school, I know that her leadership will ensure Ripley Central will be a welcoming school that provides an inclusive and supportive environment where students can thrive with passion and purpose. I am excited to meet with Wuanita over the coming weeks to see how the school is settling in and coming along.

Meeting with school principals in my electorate is one of the things I do at the beginning of every year. I make the time to meet with each school principal from the 23 public and private schools across my electorate. I really appreciate and value their time and their feedback. It is great to hear about the schools' achievements and how the families are going in the area. Teachers and schools have their hands on everything that is happening in the community and they are a great source for local members.

The past three years have seen a lot of disruptions for our schools locally. We have had COVID-19, floods and complex issues across the nation that affect children and their learning. We have the invasion of Ukraine and climate change issues, and these are things that cause quite a lot of anxiety in our kids. Our principals and teachers in the classrooms are helping to guide our children through these difficult times, and I do appreciate everything they do.

The Palaszczuk government is a fantastic supporter of education—unlike the LNP, which shut down six schools when they were in government and had another 50 on their hit list. Since we got into government in 2015, we have opened 25 new state schools and we have invested \$1.6 billion.

Mr Tantari interjected.

Ms HOWARD: I take that interjection. We have opened 25 new schools since 2015. We have put them in Queensland's fastest growing areas so that children can access world-class education wherever they live. I am proud to say that all the state schools in Ipswich are air-conditioned. That has been important for them and I thank the minister for that again. What is more, they are powered by solar energy as part of our Advancing Clean Energy Schools program. Investing in school education gives Queensland children the best start in life, and our government has a fantastic track record.