




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAIWAR

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ADJOURNMENT

Maiwar Electorate, Schools

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (7.18 pm): It is more than 2½ years now since the Minister for Education announced funding for a new primary school in Brisbane's inner west. Believe me, I was as excited as anyone when this funding commitment was made. On the minister's initial time estimates, the school should have already opened on day one this school year. Since then the department has proposed just two locations for the new school, neither of which had community support. Co-location with Indooroopilly State High School would have worsened the existing traffic nightmare and would have been terrible for a popular and growing school. The Toowong Bowlo site we all know is flood-prone public land next to a protected flying fox colony. When the minister told me last year they would be reconsidering the location and the school would be delayed again, I told her we would support that so we could take the time to find a better site.

I also made it very clear that we still urgently need a new school in the inner west and she agreed. Now, six months later, there is radio silence from the government—no news on an amended time line or possible alternative sites, no sign of the report from the second round of consultation, no response to my recent letter requesting a meeting with the minister about this.

Meanwhile, Indooroopilly State School is absolutely chockers, with around 1,400 students enrolled this year. Despite the construction of a fantastic new building recently, Toowong State School is essentially back to full capacity and in the same situation it endured in 2019 when half the school oval was taken over by demountables for three years. I understand student numbers at Indooroopilly State High School are about 700 beyond its built capacity. It seems the response is, once again, to spend—about \$3 million this time—to put six demountables on the school oval, never mind that the kids need that space to play or that junior science classes are having limited laboratory time or that the student support space has to be used as a classroom now. This is a direct result of a failure to plan ahead.

I have lost count of how many times I have urged the government to just make the investment in necessary school infrastructure in my area, to bite the bullet and acquire new land for the new school in the most appropriate area. I have suggested options in Taringa like a smaller school at the TriCare development site or purchasing the blocks that are up for sale around the Taringa train station, but they apparently just do not want to acquire new land. The government is only too happy to spend billions demolishing and rebuilding the Gabba and, no less, taking out a heritage-listed state school along the way, but they will not stump up the cash for the new school they promised my community years ago.

It is time to get real. There is clearly no suitable state owned land in the area. It is not like finding a bonus fiver in your jacket pocket when you put it on. The minister has not missed the perfect site somewhere in state owned land within Maiwar. If they are really worried about paying for it, why not introduce a windfall gains tax on developers so that the families living in the countless new apartments in my electorate have a place to send their kids to school?