




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

Record of Proceedings, 25 October 2023

ADJOURNMENT

St Paul's School

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (7.15 pm): St Paul's School is situated at Bald Hills just outside of my electorate. Many past and present students and parents are my constituents. For the past 15 years the college has been expertly led by award-winning principal Dr Paul Browning who, after the school featured in the royal commission into child sex abuse, was instrumental in restoring its good name as he reached out to sexual abuse survivors.

In May 2022 the chair of the Anglican Schools Commission, the ASC, Bishop Jeremy Greaves, and the executive director, Sherril Butterworth, met the school council to discuss Dr Browning's contract that was due to expire at the end of 2023. An extract of the minutes of that meeting states—

Sherril Butterworth advised it was clear Paul Browning was very experienced and knew how to run a school, and that it would therefore not be necessary to undertake the comprehensive process outlined in his current contract. She felt a process involving self-reflection based around his vision for the future, coupled with a 360 survey would be adequate.

A few months later the school council, after following the direction of the ASC, unanimously recommended Dr Browning be offered a further five-year contract. The 360 review came back with an 89 per cent approval of Dr Browning's work. In March 2023 the Anglican Schools Commission informed the school council it was sacking Dr Browning, despite never contacting the school council in the six months following the recommendation to reappoint him. After the school council continued to press for an explanation, they themselves were sacked.

In September 2023, again with no discussion with the parent community, the ASC terminated Dr Browning's employment early, effective from the end of term 3. To say that the aforementioned actions shocked the school community is an understatement. They were and remain devastated. Here is an excerpt from a letter from a year 12 student describing the impact on the student body—

The uncertainty and disruptions caused by this decision have left many of us feeling adrift, anxious, and unsure of what the future holds for our school community. It has affected our morale and confidence at a time when we should be celebrating our accomplishments and looking forward to a promising future.

I table that letter.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from an anonymous student regarding the decision by the Anglican Church not to renew the contract of the Principal of St Paul's School, Dr Paul Browning [1761](#).

Putting aside any arguments about the merits of the decision made by the ASC, the process not to renew Dr Browning and then finish him early has been abysmal. I call on the education minister to heed the submission made by the school community to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board. Minister, do the command and control actions of the ASC over the last 12 months meet the governance standards and practices of a modern education institution?

(Time expired)