




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Cooper Electorate, Education

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.34 pm): If there is one thing I know from travelling across Queensland and listening to communities speak about their young people, it is that we all want our kids to flourish and have the opportunity to learn, to get a good job and to pursue their dreams. That is why I have put a solid focus on delivering for our local schools, starting with an incredible half a million dollar renovation for The Gap State High School tuckshop. As the only public high school in my electorate, I have also fought to secure a \$12 million STEM building for The Gap State High School, and in the last budget I was able to secure funding for disability access ramps because all children have the right to attend their classrooms.

I have secured funding for additional and upgraded classrooms for Ashgrove State School, Milton State School, Payne Road State School and Petrie Terrace State School. I delivered a \$12 million STEM building for Ithaca Creek State School and renovated the pool bathrooms so that students there and those training with the Ithaca Sharx can get changed and shower in modern facilities that are no longer 'gross'.

We have announced the amalgamation of the Red Hill Special School onto the Fulcher Road campus. It is such a great announcement and something that I have been fighting for since I was elected three years ago. The Fulcher Road site will undergo a major transformation with a purpose-built school to accommodate up to 210 students with disabilities and high needs. The students and their families have been great advocates, routinely expressing to me their desire to see their children in fit-for-purpose learning environments. I want to work with them to make sure we deliver the right outcomes. I thank all staff at the Red Hill Special School, including the educators, support team, admin and cleaners who are so incredibly professional, loving and dedicated to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to develop.

I will speak on two issues I have raised with the minister on behalf of constituents. I would love to see us looking at extending the age for students attending special school. There is clear evidence that neural plasticity is strongest from birth until the age of 25. There are great models where special schools have remained available for students into their 20s, and I would really love to see us explore that.

I would also add my voice to the member for Capalaba's sentiments earlier this week. There is such a need for greater support for children with autism, both in mainstream classrooms and a greater range of specialist schools. There are private schools around, but there are not enough. We need to think about some publicly funded options for these students. I would love to see our Waterworks Road campus, which will now be freed up, considered for a dedicated school for children living with autism. All Queensland children deserve the right support to get to school, to stay at school and to excel at school.