



Speech By  
**Kendall Morton**


**MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Virb Education Hub**

 **Ms MORTON** (Caloundra—LNP) (12.20 am): Today I rise to talk about a very special place in Caloundra. It is led by an incredible team—Josh, Sam and all their volunteers—who are dedicated, positive and committed to making a difference to young people in Caloundra. It is called the Virb Education Hub. It is an alternative learning centre dedicated to re-engaging disengaged or at-risk students in grades 7 to 10 who are either struggling with or have already completely disengaged from mainstream schooling. The Virb hub creates a safe space for these fantastic kids to be supported to continue their education rather than falling through the cracks. As soon as you enter the hub you see an alternative place for these children. It is colourful, it is welcoming, it is inclusive and it is respectful.

I heard from one dad who spoke so lovingly about his happy, academic, sporty year 6 child who then battled through two years of high school due to a range of factors, including bullying. He used the words that night: 'I thought I'd lost my son.' Then they found Virb and this student is now thriving. Another student wrote the following for her adults at Virb—

Meeting you was the best thing to happen to me. Thank you for changing my life.

The hub is a proven method for early intervention and it is working. Data does not lie. Here are some Virb statistics from 2024. At the start of the year they had 18 students enrolled. Four of them have already reintegrated into mainstream schooling, with another five starting back at the start of the school year next year. Of the 18 students, all had a zero per cent attendance rate prior to attending Virb. They were simply not going to school over an extended period of time. During 2024, of the 18 students, 13 had a 100 per cent attendance rate and the remaining five had 70 per cent or above, which is a significant improvement on zero.

The last time this group of students attended mainstream schooling they collectively averaged 0.88 behaviour incidents per week. This has dropped to 0.22, and zero incidents of a violent nature. Some 89 per cent of these kids have a neurodivergent diagnosis such as ADHD or ASD and they have had no funding or support from the previous government. They were not even interested in meeting with them.

These are the kinds of programs that are working in Caloundra. I would like to acknowledge the incredible work of Josh, Sam, John, Jarryd, Rachel, Alder and Robyn, their whole team and the amazing families who support these kids at Virb in Caloundra. It should be recognised and celebrated.