



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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ADJOURNMENT

Education, Future Schools

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.54 pm): The rolling teachers' strikes in Queensland are not a surprise to anyone with continuing conditions that are unacceptable, including the violence in our schools. Over the years, I have raised the issues brought to me by our fabulous teachers, principals and students, including the increasing use of anti-anxiety medication to get through the day, as well as potential solutions through simple, innovative approaches.

In 2019 in Noosa we hosted Pasi Stahlberg, then of the Gonski Institute and now at the University of Melbourne, and Peter Hutton, one of the founders of Future Schools. They shared models that delivered comparable academic results with far less stress on everyone. This included Peter's experience when he was principal of a state school, Templestowe College in Victoria, where they utilised a loophole to deviate from the state curriculum to provide individualised learning programs for the benefit of all students. The school grew from 250 to 1,250 students and is a working example of how you can customise learning, reduce disengagement and improve outcomes and teacher conditions without segregating students. In 2023, they were awarded the Australian Secondary School of the Year.

With waitlists for flexi schools and alternate forms of education continuing, it may be years before we have enough of these. With parental consent required, often the children who need individualised programs the most are not given permission. The comprehensive review of school resourcing, conducted by the Department of Education, raised the need to ensure that each of the nearly 600,000 Queensland state school students has the resources to succeed. However, they also need learning customised to them, which is possible by tweaking the current system as demonstrated by Templestowe. A by-product reported of Future Schools is better behaviours and increased responsibility by students and more time for teachers to do those endless administrative tasks—even marking papers in paid time versus after-hours; the better conditions they are seeking.

As Peter said, we can make small, effective changes starting on Monday. Broader reforms to avoid using loopholes to develop individualised learning require us to focus on what is sought—that is, happy, healthy and engaged teachers and students in a system that is inclusive of learning diversity. Not everyone wants to go to higher education; they seek pathways to their future. I express gratitude to my schools, which are doing great work in this space. That includes Sunshine Beach high, where certificate I construction students are building tiny homes for our most vulnerable, and Noosa district high's FlexiSpace for students to follow their identified passions, including to become jillaroos, Michelin chefs or even a future prime minister. Please support our teachers and students by moving into the future and not bandaiding outdated systems.