




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Coomera State School, 150th Anniversary

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (6.23 pm): Tonight I rise to talk about a special event coming up in the Theodore electorate. This year Coomera State School will celebrate its 150 years. Coomera State School first opened its doors on 11 July 1873 with 16 pupils under the watchful gaze of Mr Augustus White. The original school slab was located on the property of Mr Stevens near the Upper Coomera School of Arts. This site was short-lived, and I will explain why. Mr White wrote to the secretary of the Board of Education in Brisbane seeking a more appropriate location. In bad weather events, children had to walk six miles to and from school to avoid flooded creeks and deep gullies. Therefore, a new location was found and the school was relocated on 20 July 1874 further down the river near the ferry crossing on the northern side of the Coomera River.

The settlement was originally called Ferry Town but later was renamed Coomera. The school was happily named Coomera Lower State School. Interestingly though, another school, Coomera Upper State School, opened its doors in 1887 within a short distance of the original school at the Coomera site right beside the School of Arts and near the cenotaph. This school was amalgamated with Coomera State School in 1964. Today there is still a concrete pad and a fence that remain that indicate the original location of that school.

Coomera State School has a proud history in our region. Many former Coomera State School student names are listed on our local cenotaph at both Upper Coomera and Pimpama, highlighting the sacrifice that the families made for our nation—30 students to be exact. The North Gold Coast RSL and my office have been working tirelessly on plaques and poppies to remember these former fallen students. Unfortunately, we do not have enough time to talk about these colourful students, but I will say that attendance rates back in those days were not the highest priority as many families were struggling with extreme hardship and the school also struggled to pay for ink wells and books for the kids.

The school will be celebrating its birthday on 11 July with the opening of a time capsule and students dressing up in olden day clothes. World renowned artist Donald James Waters OAM will be unveiling a memorial depicting the history of the school. On Saturday, 15 July the school will be hosting a fete that will include displays, memorabilia stalls and rides—something for the whole family and a fascinating trip back in time.