




Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**

**MEMBER FOR THEODORE**

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### **EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) (HELPING FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL COSTS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (6.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Education (General Provisions) (Helping Families with School Costs) Amendment Bill. I participated early on in the committee hearings into this legislation. Whilst I understand where the member is coming from, I want to highlight the efforts that my local P&Cs go to for their school communities. The wonderful individuals on these P&Cs give up an enormous amount of their time to fundraise for the schools to offset some of the costs. For instance, when it comes to school camps, extracurricular activities and getting jerseys made up, the P&Cs at quite a few schools in my electorate work tirelessly in this regard. When it comes to competing against schools from other districts, it would be remiss of me not to highlight that many of the schools in my electorate do not have the excellence programs that some inner-city Brisbane schools do, and that puts them at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to where the money is going. These schools do not have rowing programs and ballet classes. It would be remiss of me not to highlight that.

As the members for Southern Downs and Hinchinbrook highlighted in their contributions on this legislation, there are different parts of our state which are lacking in resources even when it comes to teaching numbers. There are small townships with one-teacher schools. This places an enormous burden on the teaching staff. We also need to take that into account in terms of these issues. The member may feel that this is very important for her electorate, but as a member of the education committee for many years I can certainly attest to the disparity in what is happening between the more rural areas and the inner-city Brisbane areas. There is a clear disparity between the two. We need to look at funding when it comes to those areas to ensure they get their fair share.

When it comes to schools in my electorate on the Gold Coast, the state schools do their best to have some fantastic facilities. The schools in my electorate have STEM excellence programs and sporting excellence programs. This demonstrates that those schools are trying to cater for their students' needs, but when they are competing against the top echelon private schools on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, such as Brisbane Grammar, they are always going to find it very difficult simply because of the amount of money going into those private schools and how they divvy that up. St Stephen's College in my electorate is a very expensive school and the education there is second to none. Our state schools do their utmost to compete with that. Many state schools are competing with it very well, so that shows that the system at the moment is working. When people want to enrol in the state school system, in schools such as Pacific Pines State High School and Helensvale State School, that shows that the state school system is competing very well.

Whilst there is merit in what the member is trying to do with this legislation, we have to understand that there are schools that are at a distinct disadvantage. I did promise the Greens member that I would not take up all of the time remaining, but I just wanted to highlight the absolutely fantastic work that our local P&Cs are doing to offset costs to make it affordable for families, especially when there is a cost-of-living crisis gripping this state at the moment, with high rents which are forcing families to literal

breaking point. I will limit my contribution to those few remarks. Again, there is a bigger picture than just resourcing inner-city Brisbane schools, because there is a clear disparity with schools in regional areas and it is not fair on them.