

ADJOURNMENT

Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (7.51 p.m.)—Last Sunday I joined with over 100 local parents and the school board of the Lutheran Ormeau Rivers District School, or LORDS, to demonstrate our extreme frustration and outrage at the Queensland Bligh Labor government's position on the future of the school. This local community has been trying for almost a decade to establish a much needed P-12 school in the fastest-growing electorate in the nation, which is Fadden. The tale of how the school arrived at the bureaucratic conundrum in which it now finds itself would be comical and farcical if not for the frustration it has caused to the organisers and the detriment that the delays have caused to local students.

The school site was purchased in 2001, after many years of planning, and was held in trust until such time as the school held appropriate approvals for commencement. Approval was granted by the Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District and the Queensland Office of Non-State Schooling for the school to commence in January 2006. It was approved by the then Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, who is now the Queensland Premier. Everything seemed sure to go ahead. The minister was behind it. Over 100 parents provisionally enrolled their children, uniforms were organised and plans were made. Capital funding grants totalling \$1.3 million from both the state and federal governments were made to the school.

Then came the almighty elephant in the room: the South East Queensland Regional Plan—an overriding authority which effectively rezoned the site from 'special residential' to 'small lot rural and open space/landscape protection' and suddenly and dramatically thrust the school into a nightmare that continues today. The regional plan zoned the proposed school into oblivion. There seems little chance of resolution at present despite the ease with which a resolution could be reached. This problem could be resolved with the simple stroke of a pen by the state government. Premier Bligh saw the value of this school when she was education minister and gave approval for the school to go ahead. It is now up to her to live up to her previous commitment, cut through the bureaucratic red tape and deliver for local parents and students in Ormeau. The corridor in which the school is to be placed is the fastest-growing area in the nation, and any unnecessary delay to infrastructure of any kind is completely unacceptable.

A rigid and immovable regional plan is a defective regional plan. The plan's own stated aim is to effectively accommodate population growth throughout South-East Queensland. So where are the private schools in the area? Surely, considering the already rapid growth in the area, a privately funded school in a region severely lacking in infrastructure of all types would be the perfect candidate for an exemption from the plan. This is especially so because the site of the new school is on a magnificent hilltop a mere 150 metres from the railway station. Locations simply do not get any better than this.

I firmly believe that parents have a right to choose a school for their children. But, considering this historical debacle, the question is: do you, Premier Bligh? Three new schools in this immediate area, all of them state run, have been approved and funded in the recent Queensland Labor budget. Either the Labor government in Queensland is incompetent or there is something more sinister lurking in the depths of this moribund Labor administration. Unless this bureaucratic nonsense is stopped and the school is approved, the only logical conclusion that can be reached is that this is a classic case of Labor politics of envy. Unless this nonsense is stopped and the school is approved, there is only one conclusion that can be reached and that is typical thuggery from a teacher union which hates private education and old-fashioned Labor Party thinking which espouses the notion that private education is bad.

We are waiting, Premier. Let me tell you that you are on notice. You need to act now or you will pay the price at the ballot box. The school is in the middle of the brand new state seat of Coomera. I will simply not rest until this seat is proudly a Liberal-National Party seat and has a thriving LORDS school in the middle of it. I urgently call on the Premier to follow up on her words from 2006 and implement the school she approved as Minister for Education.