



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Herbert Electorate: Belgian  
Gardens State School**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 19 September 2012**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Wednesday, 19 September 2012	<b>Source</b>	House
<b>Page</b>	11327	<b>Proof</b>	No
<b>Questioner</b>		<b>Responder</b>	
<b>Speaker</b>	Jones, Ewen, MP	<b>Question No.</b>	

**Mr EWEN JONES** (Herbert) (09:54): I rise to speak about a great community event in Townsville on the weekend. It was the 125th anniversary of the opening of Belgian Gardens State School. In fact, it was Townsville North State School that was opened in 1887 in the suburb of German Gardens. German Gardens had its name changed during World War I, but the school did not change its name until 1930.

It was a day of great celebration, and it was ably MCed by school captains Dylan Mann and Florence Cappler-Shillington—who is also a very dab hand at the violin. She and some past students from Belgian Gardens State School who are now at one of Townsville's fantastic state high schools, the Pimlico State High School, performed a string quintet, I think. They did *Clocks* by Coldplay, and it was absolutely magnificent to see the skills of these primary and secondary school students. There were also bush dances by the grade 2s. There were classroom displays. There were aquaponics displays where they grow their own vegetables and salad things, as well as a finch aviary. There were great displays by the school band.

I think Belgian Gardens State School looks very much like my state school, Texas State School, where I grew up. It is exactly the same sort of building and exactly the same sort of field. It is a great community school, and it is the model for what schools should be. It is led by Principal Suzanne Currin, who has only been there for 12 months but shows great leadership and brings the school community together. She sets the tone for the school. The school has community engagement through the P&C. Fleur Francis is an excellent communicator and a very clever person herself; she has a science background. She has really got the P&C together, working as one with the school to provide a great learning environment. That learning environment is reinforced by quality teachers who love their trade and love what they do, which makes it so easy for the kids to come into that school, because they can walk into an environment that is so positive that it makes them want to learn. I think it infects the kids with being good students and wanting to do better.

I think we focus so much on the issue of money and classroom sizes now. Only recently I saw a photo of my younger brother's grade 3 class in 1970 at Texas State School. There were 35 kids in that photo, and not one person in the front row was wearing shoes. There were some very bad haircuts. There were 35 kids in that class, with one teacher and no teachers aide. There were no PowerPoints and no data projectors, but everyone in that class could read and write. It comes down to having a principal that can work, and you will get the right results.