



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

ADJOURNMENT

Education

SPEECH

Thursday, 14 February 2008

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Questioner
Speaker Hayes, Chris, MP

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Mr HAYES (Werriwa) (12.48 pm)—As I look around the parliament, one thing that tends to unite a lot of parliamentarians is—oddly enough—that we are parents. In my case I am a very, very proud grandparent. Leading on from this, as parents or grandparents we want the best for our children and for our children's children. One of the things that I take particular pride in, in terms of the election of the Rudd Labor government, is our commitment to education. To have the best jobs and the best opportunities in life, Australian students need to receive a first-class education. They need a world standard education. This will require a considerable amount of investment, both public and private, and we will need to look at the quality of subjects to ensure that students are well trained. We also need to have dedicated teachers and the best classroom facilities. Our children have to have access to computers, laboratories and workshops.

Labor's policy, which is now being put into operation, of providing for a digital education revolution, will set a benchmark for education in this country. Students from years 9 to 12 will soon have access to computers and digital information technologies. Under Labor's plan, schools will soon—next month, in fact—be able to apply for grants of up to \$1 million, either for the facilitation of computers or to enable the introduction of computers for every student in years 9 to 12. That is an investment, over four years, of \$1 billion. I think that is a significant commitment to the welfare of families—most of all to the welfare of our kids. It is an investment in their futures.

Over the course of our lives as parliamentarians we do spend a lot of time at schools. Since the announcement of the Rudd Labor government's commitment to the digital education revolution, I have received an enormous amount of support for that policy. That support has come not only from school principals but also from P&Cs, student bodies and parents. The policy has a uniting aspect to it, because, as I said earlier, this is an investment in the futures of our children. So whether those schools be government schools, systemic Catholic schools or independent schools, all see this as a significant contribution.

There is a school in my electorate in Prestons, the Islamic school Sule College, which has 1,100 students with 600 high school students. This year alone there are approximately 400 students in years 9 to 12. The financial controller of that school, Recep Aydogan, indicated to me that his school community was over the moon that a federal government would take so seriously their commitment to taking education forward.

We are not just continuing funding to education; we are putting funding resources into a targeted aspect of education which will take things forward. We are not talking about simply giving IT education; this is a matter of incorporating computers and computer based technologies into the teaching of all subjects. This is a matter of taking our teaching methods and learning tools into the future. This is a matter of equipping our kids as they grow up with the knowledge and skills they will need in order to participate in a world that is vastly changed from the one we grew up in and one that is highly competitive. I support the policy. (*Time expired*)