



House of Assembly

Tuesday 3 May 2011

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

MARK OLIPHANT COLLEGE

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:10): My question is to the Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development. Can the minister update the house on the brand new Mark Oliphant College?

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham – Minister for Education, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Science and Information Economy) (15:10): I would like to thank the honourable member for his question and acknowledge his role as a member of the governing council of this wonderful new school, the Mark Oliphant College. It is the fifth of the state government's \$200 million program of education works, the initiative for new schools in the metropolitan area.

It is the next plank in our real commitment to address disadvantage and education in the northern and north-western suburbs and part of the biggest investment in school infrastructure in a generation. The new school opened its doors today. Sir Mark Oliphant, as many in this

chamber would be aware, was an Adelaide boy. He studied physics.

The Hon. M.J. Atkinson: An Unley High School boy.

The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL: Unley High School, indeed. He studied at the University of Adelaide. He formed the Australian Academy of Science and became Governor of South Australia in 1971, and he actively promoted science in South Australian schools and universities. Fittingly, this state-of-the-art school has a focus on science at all year levels. Science is taught by all teachers, beginning in reception up to year 7, with specialist teachers in years 8 to 12.

Mark Oliphant College is the first birth to 12 school purpose built to teach across all of the school years. It combines childcare, preschool, primary and high school all in the one location and provides a seamless transition between those various years of schooling. At the same time, its schooling components are divided into four subschools, or schools within schools: early years, primary years, middle years and senior years.

Each subschool has a dedicated head of school and leadership group which provides guidance and structure to that particular group of students. The subschools all come together in a village green and are connected by a number of covered walkways.

The school has been carefully designed to provide all of the benefits of having that whole-of-school approach on the one site, while at the same time retaining the focus on each individual child, because we know that every single child has unique needs and that the key to unlocking the creativity of each child is to focus on that sense of individuality.

The school is 21st century ready, with wireless networks throughout the

school to support e-learning of students. The school has almost 500 MacBooks, personal computers, iPads and iPods being used by students from birth to year 12, and this will increase to a further 900 devices by the end of the year.

I want to particularly acknowledge the school community and those students and parents who have taken this quite bold decision, because it is the coming together of a number of schools. It was a decision that a number of parents approached with some trepidation but now that they have seen the outcome, the benefits and what they have achieved with this school, I think everybody is incredibly excited and are fortified in the view that they took.

I want to thank and congratulate principal Lynne Symons and her staff and school community for the work they have done in making sure that this school is a success. They are all incredibly excited. I heard today from the new chief executive, Keith Bartley, who started this week. He went to the school today and was shown through the school. He was thrilled to see the looks on the faces of the young students, some of them pretty bewildered about their new environment, but all incredibly excited about the opportunities this new school will bring.