

15 June 2010

ADJOURNMENT

Lindsay Electorate - Education Funding

Mr BRADBURY (Lindsay) (8.54pm) — Over the last 2½ years schools right around this country have been undergoing a revolution, but it appears as though the counterrevolution has begun. The Liberal-National Party have announced that they will take an axe to many of the very successful programs and the investments in education and training that this government has commenced. This is a grave threat and a grave risk to the educational opportunities of students right around this country, but in particular it is a threat in electorates like mine and other electorates in Western Sydney.

I will mention a few of the programs that are to be cut or slashed under the coalition if they were to be elected to office. They will be scrapping the funding for the computers in schools program, which is a very successful program. It is so successful a program that even the shadow Minister for Finance is claiming credit for having delivered computers into schools in his community on his own website under the heading of 'What we have achieved for our community.' He achieved nothing. He was part of a government that did not deliver any of that money. He was then part of an opposition that opposed that expenditure. He is now not only a member of an opposition that wants to rip that funding away but also the chief architect, the one who has the plan, of ripping that funding away. Yet he has the temerity to tell people on his website that that is what he is delivering for his community.

We have the scrapping of the computers in schools program. We have the discontinuation of round 3 of Building the Education Revolution. We have the scrapping of funding for trades training centres. We also have this proposal to rip away the funding that has been allocated to improve teacher quality in our schools. The impact of these cuts would be devastating and it would be felt in those communities that are at the front line of trying to use education as a tool for overcoming socio-economic disadvantage. My electorate and others in Western Sydney would be hardest hit.

Recently I visited Cranebrook High School with the Deputy Prime Minister to hand over the 300,000th computer under the Digital Education Revolution program. We witnessed a music class and an agricultural class that were using these technologies to teach students in a way that previous generations never had the opportunity to experience. Make no mistake about it, if these programs are cut, there will be many schools in our country that

will continue to have the resources to teach students with those new technologies, but there will be many schools in communities like mine that will miss out.

Under this program, Cranebrook High School has already received 204 computers. If the coalition were to be elected, they stand to lose the remaining 64 computers they would expect to receive under this program. But there are many more schools in my community that would suffer as a result of these cuts. In my community alone another 1,013 computers would be stripped away. But let's look at some of the neighbouring electorates—for example, 990 computers in Macarthur, 795 computers in Macquarie and 733 computers in Greenway would be ripped away. I heard the member for Greenway in the Main Committee earlier today complaining about Building the Education Revolution. She has a lot of explaining to do because she is not only the member for Greenway but also the candidate for Macquarie, so she should take ownership of the cuts that her opposition want to inflict in both of these electorates if they are elected to government. We are talking about 1,528 computers in total from those two electorates. She should hang her head in shame.

In addition to that, if we look at Building the Education Revolution we see that in my electorate \$27.6 million worth of projects would be cut away. We see in Macarthur it would be \$24.2 million. In Macquarie it would be \$72.7 million. If we add to that the \$21.9 million in Greenway, the member for Greenway has to account for why she wants to allow her party to rip away \$94.6 million worth of school building projects in the electorates that she either represents or wants to represent. We will not stand for it. They want to rip away money from trade training centres and rip money away from teacher training. The counterrevolution is under way. They will not rest until they take away every opportunity that this government has presented students in regions like mine as far as educational opportunities are concerned.