

Tropical Learning Academy

Last week in the Barron River electorate, we were very fortunate to welcome Minister for Education, Training and Employment, John-Paul Langbroek, for the second time in the space of just a few months.

In May, Minister Langbroek took time out from his very busy schedule to chair a Principals' roundtable. I cannot stress how well received this was, and how grateful each principal was to have ample time to talk to the Minister about issues of concern, ideas and most particularly, praise for Great Results Guarantee, which was uniformly accepted as a great initiative of this government.

This time, Minister Langbroek was in Cairns to launch the Tropical North Learning Academy.

The Tropical North Learning Academy is a strategic partnership between Trinity Beach State School, Smithfield State High School and James Cook University.

Trinity Beach and Smithfield form the Tropical North Learning Academy for the Department of Education, Training and Employment, with James Cook University being the tertiary partner.

The Learning Academy opens doors to tertiary education in many ways, creating a seamless educational pathway from the early phase of learning to university and adult life. It fosters a university focused culture that helps students meet their academic potential.

TNLA partners work together to provide a range of "learning enhancements", called academies, for students at all stages of learning. Partners also work to ensure smooth transitions occur at the key junctures of schooling.

A key driver that underpins its educational direction is the question:
"Is life getting better in the tropics?"

Well, I for one consider life is certainly getting better in the tropics. And in the field of education, it seems school principals are feeling the benefits of this government's commitment to revitalise Queensland's education system to ensure our children get the best possible start in life.

Some of the signature programs offered include

- specialist JCU Learning Academies for high achieving, tertiary aspirants from Year 5 to 12
- Philosophy in Action – which explores future life in the tropics using the disciplines of philosophy and critical thinking
- a Jazz Academy for talented and aspiring musicians
- onsite Montessori early childhood programs for children up to 3 years
- Soccer and Baseball Academies for talented sportsmen and sportswomen, and...
- Vocational Training – a diverse suite of accredited Cert III & IV courses

Plans are in place to expand the current programs to include international learning partnerships through the Tropical Alliance of Universities, enhancing partnerships with industry and community groups and world class e-learning capabilities providing access to global learning communities.

With this week's announcement that children in Year 5 will learn a second language, it's great news for our electorate where we are keen to see young children have the opportunity to learn Mandarin.

Education has never looked better in Queensland and the mood is very positive for our children's future.

I would also thank the Minister for surprising many delighted Barron River Seniors by accompanying me to Senior Week celebrations in the electorate.