



Speech By  
**Mark Boothman**


**MEMBER FOR ALBERT**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2017

## **EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

### **Report, Motion to take note**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (11.47 am): I too rise to make a short contribution to the committee's response to Auditor-General's report No. 19 titled *Early childhood education*. I would like to follow on from my fellow committee colleagues, the member for Broadwater and the member for Townsville, and thank our early childhood teaching staff for their hard work. It is critically important that we get this right because a large percentage of learning is done in the early years. I would again like to profusely thank the early childhood teachers in my local area for their dedication and the work they do with our children. I have a young son who is 'living the dream' in kindergarten at the moment, and I must say that he is very excited every time he comes home and tells me what he has been up to and what he has learned that day. He certainly brings home some weird and wonderful creations.

As other people have mentioned, I would like to emphasise the section of the report which concerns distance education. I am reminded of my visit quite a few years ago to the Charters Towers School of Distance Education with the then member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens. We met with the principal, John Clark, who is a very proactive individual. We were astounded by the dedication of him and his team to get information out there to small remote communities. One thing about being in South-East Queensland is that we are lucky because we can very quickly go down to local convenience stores and shopping centres. People who live in more remote areas do without a lot, so ensuring that they have access to quality education is critically important. That was highlighted in the report, which states—

In 2012 Queensland pioneered the introduction of eKindy through the Brisbane School of Distance Education to 'ensure children in rural and remote areas did not miss out'.

Kindergarten is a critically important first step on the education pathway. An attendance rate of 96.4 per cent is a credit to the system. It highlights that parents realise the critical importance of early learning. Those on all sides of politics should keep pushing forward with this as we live in a global environment. No longer are we competing against just the person next door; we are also competing against citizens from other countries. As the world becomes a more high-tech place, that will be more evident in the years to come. As a result, we need to make sure our young minds have the best start possible and learn the three R's—reading, writing and arithmetic—at an early stage in life.

My daughter attended kindy only a couple of years ago. A lot of her learning was play based, yet we were astounded that she was becoming very adept at counting and understanding words. She would sit down and try to read a book to her mum and me. As a parent I can say that that was wonderful.

The report shows that we have seen dramatic increases in the rate of Indigenous participation in early childhood education and care—from 25.5 per cent in 2008 to 85.6 per cent in 2015. That is a credit to all involved.