



Eidos + Congress 2005

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Tent Transcripts

Tent 2: Panel B

10am May 18, 2005

Panelists

Mr Leslie Hooper, President, Queensland Art Teachers Association

Ms Debbie Kember, President, Joint Council of Queensland Teachers Associations

Mr Anthony McGruther, State President, Queensland Association of State School Principals

Mr Phil Tomkinson, Vice President, Queensland Parents of People with a Disability

Mr Wayne Wilkinson, Principal, Mitchelton Special School

Facilitator: Mr Terry Kearney, Assistant Director General, Department of Education & the Arts

Transcript

TERRY KEARNEY: Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence here this morning and I'd really like to kick off the day. It's the first public day, as in, throughout all of today, a set of public forums to be conducted and I thank you for being the early risers and it's an incredibly favourable day. I trust it will stay that way for the rest and people will thoroughly enjoy both the venue and the debate and discussion that should come with us.

My name is Terry Carney, I'm Assistant Director General with Education Queensland and am honoured to be asked to come across and facilitate this session this morning. As I said, the session is really the start of day two. Yesterday 30 researchers spent a day at the Ship Inn looking at the fundamental questions around research and today, as the day unfolds, in both tents, there becomes a public discussion around the key issues and the issues as supported throughout Oz is that issue of ideas. Okay. And I really want to pick up on that theme of idea.

And in introducing the people up the front with me to really take it forward, the key question that they've been given is, if you were stuck in a lift for five minutes and in that lift with you – and we could pretend it's a fairly extensive sort of life, we could probably live with that – are two people, the Premier of Queensland and the Prime Minister of Australia. The lift jams somewhere between the 20th and 21st floor and the beeper goes off and says, "People, you're going to be stuck there, we think for about four and half or five minutes and then we'll have you free". And it's really you and those other two and five minutes and it's your destiny. If you've got an opinion, this is it and this is your chance to deliver it to the two key people.

So that's the sort of scene. Now, at the moment we have four people with us at the front. We've got about 45 minutes to run with this. Each of our presenters have focused on a five minute grab. I'm going to allow some freedom with that five minute grab but then I will start to cross-fertilise some of the ideas that come out and let me tell you, we are then all in

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the lift. And the discussion is not just about the five of us sitting up the front, but I'd really like to make that inclusive. And because I know some people in the audience, I will absolutely not use their names, I will just use all those people I don't know. So my friends will stay with me after this. So John and Debbie, you're right, at least for the first part.

So can I just ask each of my co-presenters up here to introduce themselves and give an overview and we'll do that first and then come back and trap our people in the lift and we'll go from there.

TONY McGRUTHER: Thanks Terry. Tony McGruther, currently President of the Queensland Association of State School Principals and both excited and honoured to be asked to be a part of this today.

WAYNE WILKINSON: Wayne Wilkinson, currently Principal of Mitchelton Special School, have enjoyed working in the area of Special Education for 20 years and much of my interest in that area is around issues of managing change and issues around inclusion of students with disabilities.

LES HOOPER: Morning all. Les Hooper, I'm here as President of the Queensland Art Teachers Association. I'm also head of art at Kelvin Grove College. This time of the morning I'd normally be looking at a sea of year 11 art faces. I'm not sure whether this makes a refreshing change or not but I'm looking forward to the discussion. I'm obviously here on behalf of art teachers and art educators and very interested to hear what other people have to say.

PHIL TOMKINSON: Phil Tomkinson from Queensland Parents of People with a Disability. Strangely enough I'll be talking about issues that concern parents who have kids with a disability.

TERRY KEARNEY: Phil, thank you very much. There are three other presenters who aren't here. I just want to check they're not in the audience? There are people who should be up the front that are just quietly sitting back at the moment? No.

Well, with that, what we're going to do is – we are going to trap each of these people. It's a good context in the sense that we've got about 40 minutes and we can probably open up and create a little bit of debate at the end of each presentation leading into the next one. Okay, so if people are comfortable with that style, we might kick off with that. Tony, I'm going to start to the right, President of the Primary Principals Association.

TONY McGRUTHER: Do we come over to that lectern, is that the case?

TERRY KEARNEY: Do we need to use the lectern or can we speak from there? Okay, we'll speak from here, realise also that everything that's being said is being videoed and audio taped. And they are available and will be available and streamed online and a whole lot of things I believe. So no pressure on you, Tony.

TONY McGRUTHER: Thanks, Terry. I probably first need to explain that I'm – I left the house yesterday morning for breakfast with the Minister, Federal Minister for Education Science and Training, Brendan Nelson and I returned with a black eye. I'd just like to ensure everyone, that's not the passion of my political persuasion but rather my lack of attention to a half open garage door. So there's no threat of violence that's coming from me this morning.

Okay, that lift door closes and I find myself, unusually, the tallest of the three occupants. Yet, without doubt, these two people, Pete and Johnny fill the lift with a very powerful presence. The left and the right. The right and the more right. Or the always so sorry and the never say sorry. Feeling quite daunted by the company I, like them, chose to watch the numbers. Avoid eye contact, clutching my copy of The Financial Review.

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The lift jolts to a stop and with a refreshing reminder of our shared humanity, we make that eye contact that asks, “What do we do now?” “Who is going to lead our rescue?” “Who’s got a mobile phone?” Put it down to panic but if I was destined in this little house to be the balance of power, the third force, I felt that I needed to say something intelligent, now. “I think we’re stuck” was my smart summary of our shared predicament.

But then it hit. “Gentlemen” I said, “we are indeed stuck. Stuck in old thinking. Just as we have avoided the real opportunity to make our lives better by looking each other in the eye here this morning and versing with each other, we have instead been determined to use simple numbers to tell us where we are. And, of course, we are nowhere really but in a big square box”.

“Prime Minister, you are stuck. It’s about this Future Fund of yours. It’s being spent on the aged. Premier, you are stuck, your smart state runs on digging stuff out of holes in the ground. Tony, I too am stuck. I walk away from contact with my kids to search The Financial Review for wealth. So, sure, let’s pay off the super debt, put some money in the Treasury, reduce the mortgage. But that’s not a Future Fund. That’s not a plan for our future.

If we were to measure the success of an Australian family, would we count the cars in the garage or the dollars in the bank or would we instead measure the health of the children, the level of laughter in the lounge room, the emotional resilience of each child and their family bonds of support? Why in this country does the career expectancy of a TV executive command more attention than the life expectancy of our children?

Put it up there, Mr Howard. Put it out there, Mr Beattie. Why do we not recognise that the single most significant natural resource we have in this country is its children? Gentlemen, I propose we create a true future fund that has as its focus for investment the rounded development of the Australian child, a child who will make for us a compassionate, equitable and inclusive Australia. A richness that can be shared by all. An investment in the health, education and resiliency of the next generation of adult Australians. An investment whose results can be measured, just as our industrial investments can be measured.

I call upon us to establish alongside our financial review the childhood review, a public watching brief on the growth of our most valuable resource, our kids. If we have an all Ords, why not an all Kids. GNP might also stand for Great National Pride. Gentlemen, this is not fanciful stuff. Canada has done it. The work of Dr Fraser Mustard has established a longitudinal study with established indices to monitor the physical, intellectual and emotional development of their children, particularly the most at risk.

However, their commitment goes beyond mere inquiry to embrace action. Let us, in Australia, establish our future fund whose commitment is to reduce infant mortality rates, mental health problems, obesity, school drop outs, adolescent suicide, illiteracy, homelessness, family violence. Not as isolated government projects as they are now but a future fund that knits communities and families, retrains a generation of parents, cuddles kids, breaks down fences, employs medicos, replaces fear with trust, dependence with responsibility.

A future fund that bypasses bureaucracy and systems to support community leadership and community initiative. A future fund that requires communities to produce results for the development of our kids; results that contribute to the national bottom line; results that the Australian shareholder can see, feel, enjoy; results that truly create a healthy and wealthy nation; results we can monitor and celebrate in the Children’s Review.

A future fund that rebuilds volunteerism as a source of social capital, with the potential, as David Putnam points out in his book, *Bowling Alone*, to affect every other indicator of

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national success. Why, gentlemen, should we allow poor investment decisions to continue? Our investment in people is currently in inverse proportion to their potential to learn. We spend more to hospitalise, incarcerate and superannuate than we do to educate.

The Head Start program in the US has concluded that a dollar spent in the early years saves six in adolescence. What more proof do we need, sirs? Put it up there, Mr Beattie, put it out there, Mr Howard. So imagine for a minute what amazing capital might we add to Australia with every infant death avoided. What might the dividends be for the provision of child health professionals in school communities? What would the yield on the establishment of neighbourhood parenting centres be? What would the return on the provision of quality early childhood programs for parents and carers be?

Gentlemen, I do not ask that you do this on emotional grounds. Not either because kids are cute or vulnerable but because we cannot afford not to. It is just such an essential investment. Make the focus of our nation the development of our kids and watch over it closely. Put it up there, Mr Beattie. Put it out there, Mr Howard. You will be re-elected for one term on the back of an economic record, you could be remembered forever for your record in social change.

Prime Minister, Premier, I feel the jolt. I suspect we could be moving on. Up, or down, sirs?"

TERRY KEARNEY: From every discussion they say you take away three messages. In the initial instance you'll probably have five or six floating around in your head but just to check, clearly I heard a redirection of a concept of a future fund that's not about the age but is about children. I heard that take on a whole lot of social issues. I heard the issues around infant mortality, homelessness, lack of literacy and a whole lot of other issues being sustained and caught up in that concept and then really challenging layers of government to live with that as a public statement in the concept of the student review.

Comments? Any comments? And this is the part where everyone goes quiet and looks down and says, "I hope he hasn't been able to read my name from where he's sitting". But trust me, I haven't and I don't want to but just like to take a comment. Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (JOHN): I just wanted to get some sense of, where are the key agents of the children that fit into to your scenario? Are they in the parents and the teachers who have the greatest contact time with children? It seems to me the agents have been government agencies and social agencies. But somewhere in the [11:10] of that are people with the greatest contact. And their further development is going to capture your agenda.

TONY McGRUTHER: Well, it just seems to me that the requirement for training that we look at as one barometer doesn't kick in until children arrive at school, therefore a teacher has to be trained for a certain period of time to take over the direction of a child's education at age – well, soon to be four and a half. And there's four and half years, as Fraser Mustard pointed out, of other unknown and the less investment in those essential four and half years.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (JOHN): Exactly.

TERRY KEARNEY: Thanks, Tony. I just want to pick up, how are we capturing audio on questions? Right. So what we might do is get a handheld mic and have that ready to roam. Are there any other burning questions just at the moment? Yes, can I – yes. Down here at the front, thank you very much for doing that, that's wonderful.

NEIL ANDERSON: Hi, I'm Neil Anderson from James Cook Uni. You were talking about Fraser Mustard's research and then you made a comment that it's not just inquiry, they're actually doing something about what they find.

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TONY McGRUTHER: Yes.

NEIL ANDERSON: Could you just briefly tell us what they're actually doing about what they find?

TONY McGRUTHER: At the risk of doing great injustice to a very significant piece of work, what was established in the state of Ontario was a focus – a provision for an early childhood development and parenting framework which was enacted. And it began with a particular focus on the Inuit people and re-establishing their sense of community and reconceptualising the way that agencies work with communities.

One of the ideas that Fraser Mustard floated when he was here was the fact that perhaps we shouldn't have preschool institutions but we should build our housing estates to have homes that are walk-in/walk-out facilities that are as much about investing in the parenting skills of the parents themselves as is providing a service instead of the parents. And that was, I suppose, picking up on the point that parenting is something that goes on forever, more intensively the contact is at that early stage, but goes on. And because of alcoholism and because of the other social factors affecting the Inuit people, that that had to be re-established and that was part of the vision for how early childhood and a significant investment in those early years could be mapped in brain development. That we do as much for the ability of a child to read by putting them onto your lap as it is teaching them the functions of phonics. That that prepares them for reading as it becomes a social, warmth giving and all the necessary hormones start pumping through the body to promote brain growth.

So I suppose what his legacy will be is that we don't have to rely on feelings any more, we can actually do something about what the research is saying in terms of deinstitutionalising communities.

TERRY KEARNEY: Thanks, Tony and thanks, Neil. I think it takes me back, I was reading, *Living on Thin Air* and one of the contexts in that was Leadbetter and his advice to Blair saying, in the concept of social change, the government should invest billions of dollars, it was quoted to be, to appoint a learning manager for every child at birth. It's just a really interesting concept, a learning manager for every child at birth and I think that picks up on some of the theme that we've had developing.

I just saw the lift door open and Les Hooper has stepped into it and those same two gentlemen are still there for some reason, they're on up and down today, and Les has stepped into the fray. Mate, over to you.

LES HOOPER: Thanks, Terry. Yes, these two guys are tigers for punishment. As you'd expect from someone who's representing the Art Teachers Association, my button holing of our two leaders has got something to do with advocating for the role of arts education. So I'll go on. I think it was back in the 1930s there was a writer called C.P. Snow in England who talked about there being two cultures, one representing the arts and writing and literature and the other representing the sciences and maths and so on and both of these people spoke totally different languages that were mutually incomprehensible. And I guess a lot has moved on since that time but I think to some extent those two cultures still exist in our educational system and I think to some extent the two languages are still mutually incomprehensible.

So I guess the thesis of what I'm going to say is suggesting how we might bring those a little bit closer together. I'll read a little about what I've written and then try to work on from there. If I was stuck in the lift with our political leaders I'd want to ask what value they put on arts education of the future. In particular, I'd be interested to know how a culture can go forward without a strong and well funded commitment to arts education in our schools?

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I'm in two minds about where we're heading in this regard. On the one hand there's a lot of lip service put on the value of arts, backed up admittedly by some very good programs such as Education Queensland's Art Built-In which is a program that resources public artists in schools. The education minister's awards for excellence in art education, I think currently in our gallery here, many of you will already have had the chance to see the work of some of our students throughout Queensland and there's a range of other great things that are happening.

On the other hand, there's a lot of reductionism and I guess what I mean by this is a lot of moves to look at curriculum and try to reduce them back to what people consider to be the core elements of curriculum. And this is really impacting, in my opinion, on arts education, among other things.

Now, I'm lucky, I guess, to be in a school like Kelvin Grove State College where there is a very large and dynamic arts curriculum, a very large group of students who are doing it, right across the whole range of arts, but increasingly in Queensland I think we're in a minority.

Like most people, I fully support the central role of things like maths and language learning and science in education, the importance of technology, which gets a big run, health, physical education, sport, but I'm also convinced that the perceived deficits in these areas won't be fixed by reducing the space for arts in the curriculum. In other words, I think that some people are tempted to feel that if they can narrow the curriculum down, if they can reduce - "unclutter" is the key word I think a lot of people use, that somehow magically science and maths education will be improved. My contention is that the deficits that we perceive in those won't be fixed by actually reducing our excess to arts education.

Now, just wondering why this happens? Is this because our education and political leadership continues to see the arts as fundamentally about leisure, recreation, decoration, a kind of like value-adding? If I look at the bigger picture through my arts perspective, I'll illustrate my points by referencing one of my hobby horses, the education of young people about the future of our cities. Since 1999, QATA, my organisation, has been supporting a program called Living City, where some of our brightest and best year 11 students, mainly from art and design backgrounds, have got together in workshops to rethink and redesign special urban environments. There's been six of these around the city of Brisbane. We've probably involved, I think at last count it was about 40 schools and a couple of hundred students. The program has been showcased in various forums including Ideas at The Powerhouse and elsewhere and it illustrates vividly the relevance and urgency of design arts education that is attempting to develop critical literacies on big picture issues.

Now, as art teachers our role in education about the built environment, public art and design is pretty obvious. Our students are the future consumers of the city and public space. Their awareness and engagement, or disengagement, is going to be critically important to the fate of public space, sustainable development, safe, energetic and creative cities. All of those things might seem not to be central to the arts agenda and in fact they can be dealt with and accessed across a whole range of different curriculum but I think in arts education we have been taking some of that ground and we are taking programs like this forward as a way of addressing these real needs.

The question in schools currently is, can we afford to have these kinds of what are known as enrichment programs? Do they clutter the curriculum and take time away from core learning and my counter question is whether we can afford not to have them? A creative, sustainable future, a civilised Australian culture promoting divergent thinking could be at stake.

So I've got a couple of messages I guess. First of all, going to my own constituency, to art teachers, I would say, don't defer to anyone in developing pedagogy around issues such as

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built environment, public art and design and media. These fields are central to our role and a great nexus between art, design, media and other curriculum and a great fertile breeding ground for

cross-curriculum innovation. Just in passing, our school is also a school that's adopted a curriculum package called New Basics, which is all about experimenting with and trying to apply cross-curriculum initiatives through the middle years of schooling.

My request to our leaders, who are still in that lift, is to think carefully about the implications of reducing the role of arts in education and take a closer look at the quality of creative thinking coming out of art departments around the state. I mean, it's a truism at this stage that our future and where the jobs are going to be are largely unknown. They will depend on, I guess, a whole series of factors which aren't easily predicted and what we need to produce from our schools are the kind of creative and divergent thinkers that will be able to deal with these uncertain futures.

I guess I'm also aware, and finally, that this lift scenario requires a two-way conversation, so having harangued our leaders, I'd also basically be asking our art teachers and other educators to listen and to have their antennae out for the way things are moving on in education generally. Be prepared to evolve and adapt their programs, reach out into communities, take their practice to the market place and be prepared to defend it if they want their role to remain relevant to contemporary education.

Some of the new ideas include things like, as I said already, cross-curriculum initiatives where it's not just the arts but we're working hand in hand with built environment and working hand in hand with technology, maths, science and so on. And also, basically, maybe looking at delivery models that are a little bit different. For example, for Living City, which - I just happen to have a few copies of this to pass around - Living City - the model here is take students out of their environment for a few days for intensive workshopping and to deal with the program in a very intensive way and then to return the students to their normal curriculum in order that they digest and work through and think about what the implications are for these kinds of learning experiences. This is something that could easily be adapted in other situations and it's a model that could be of interest to the future of education generally, not just the arts education.

So having said that, I thank you all for your attention and thank our two leaders. Thank you all for listening to what we have to say and keen to hear any suggestions or questions.

TERRY KEARNEY: And therefore the door opens and we're all staring in. Again, I go back, the issues, what are the things coming through? Things I clearly heard were don't defer, have the courage and conviction and start to define pedagogy in curriculum if you're in the arts. It's pretty strong stuff. Quality and creative thinking - if you get rid of the arts you take creativity out of the agenda. Okay, there's some sparks there for debate. And listen to the practitioners themselves, listen and understand the future and be prepared to pick up and do something with that. Comments? Deb here first and then at the back please.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (DEBBIE KEMBER): Hi, Les, Debbie Kember from the Joint Council of Teacher Associations. I'm just interested in the development of skill in the specialist area, given that art has, I suppose, a case of talent skills that the kids develop and whether you find that the cross-curricula focus, which we all agree is a better way to go, still is able to help kids develop their talents in the depth that will, I suppose, serve them well when they move out into the community?

LES HOOPER: I guess it's a good question because, you know, it's one that's sort of often asked about, for example, New Basics. And there is an issue there I think, if you dilute learning across a whole series of different kind of windows, individual disciplines can lose their identity. I think you really have to think about it as two strands, they're not really contradictory. For example, if we're offering our program in New Basics to all year 8 art students and they're doing a built environment program, we're basically addressing the

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whole school community. And the students who choose or want to have that sort of intensive extension through the arts windows will then choose those strands through the senior years of their schooling. So that's kind of one model. Obviously we're not trying to make it a mutually exclusive situation but we're trying to also suggest that the arts are really – maybe take the emphasis a little bit off the idea of the arts as, you know, to fine end product that you see in the gallery down there and more as simply a process of thinking that accessible to everyone, not just the students who are going to choose visual arts or dance or drama as disciplines.

TERRY KEARNEY: Thank you, at the back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER (ANDY BRADER): Hi, Andy Brader, University of Queensland. I just wanted to go back to the first comment that you made about there being a bit of a culture clash between the arts and the sciences and that sort of stuff. I work with young people at risk, making music on computers, making videos, all that sort of, you know, the new cultural industry stuff and I notice in a lot of new, what we're calling at the moment, we're writing about new literacy practices and I'm seeing that as a bridge between the arts and those artistic sort of things and traditional reading and writing skills. And I just wondered where you think the education system as a whole is in relation to measuring new literacy practices. I'm talking about the way young people use text message conversation, that kind of language and where you think we are in that?

LES HOOPER: That's a really interesting question. One of the issues, I think it was raised also by our first speaker, it's actually quite hard to get research on things like the impact – first of all how students process creatively. It's relatively easy to measure outcomes such as literacy, spelling, reading, numeracy, things like that but when it comes down to these more complicated measurements it's actually quite difficult. So your question is sort of addressing that and I'm not sure what the answer is but I'd really like to see more emphasis on the kind of research that would take us down into seeing (a) the relevance, and, how that would work in practice.

I think the implication of that for art teachers as well and for other teachers of so-called creative subjects is they also need to broaden a little bit their interpretation of what they're doing and, maybe following up on our last question, be a little bit less discipline oriented and a little bit more open to the kind of looking at what kids are actually doing and to pick up on the things they already do brilliantly and kind of try and work through that as a bit of a window.

TERRY KEARNEY: I just wanted to pick up on that concept of critical literacy in research and the issue of research came into the debate and Bruce is in the room, so I just wanted to pick that up, the concept of critical literacies, the use of mobile phones, text messaging, MP3s, video – like I've had a little bit of this in the face in my position in education because a number of other systems have banned mobile phones and the use of MP3s and other things in schools where we as a system are actually encouraging the use of that. And believe me, it is a new learning literacy, it is a new tool. Bruce, do we have an opinion of where we're research is going with that?

AUDIENCE MEMBER (BRUCE MUIRHEAD): It's not my area, Terry, but I've had an interesting trip just recently to London and talking with different think tank and research centres there about what's going to change education. It's my question after I speak a little bit, which is – and I'll give you some time to think about it but, do schools exist in 15 years time? Like, how are we learning in 15 years? Do we actually call kids “special kids”? And they often say futurists are unemployed historians but I wouldn't mind having some blue sky thinking. And we're talking in the current way we perceive learning and buildings but I'm interested from the panellists, specially Wayne, are we in a period that “special” is defined as special and what does it look like if it's not special schools?

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But the key thing that's being spoken about in the UK, the press, The Review, the Times Review was running it, was how technology will be what gives the ultimate or complete reform of education. And I wrote a little piece in the paper this morning about an Apple shop in Regent Street, outside of Oxford Circus. I was in there for a few hours, it was a Saturday, not a work day although probably all days now are work days, but I forgot I was in a shop. It was a whole learning experience. You would go and talk to an Apple genius for a half hour consultation where they talk to you about software. There were groups of six to eight in certain circles, theatrettes, small groups, musicians, businessmen, street kids, all in this one space, learning. And I walked out thinking, "they've somehow got it" in terms of how we learn. And there's a researcher at QUT who talks about, "We do more learning outside of our institutions than inside it", Sea World, on infotainment, lifestyle shows and on the internet.

So my key question, it's like Terry's saying, we're sort of resisting some of these changes but the question from Demos and other groups is "how long can you resist these changes" because ultimately the groundswell changes things and sometimes the business sector, the corporate sector, gets it and uses it for both a way of building business and also building community or learning and such. So let's take it that at the moment – again I was saying this morning in this article, the Greek word for schooling is not buildings, it's discussion, it's playing out thoughts.

So what does schooling look like in 15 years? If the big ideas are needed now, my feeling is Howard wants that – he's going to go for probably the three year, two year project focus but if we had our chance, what does it look like and what research would be helpful to start exploring that?

TERRY KEARNEY: Can I hold the question because it's a great question that we might build right at the end. Phil, I just want to go to you and really pick up on the issue, as a representative of parents with disabilities, taking up that issue, what do you see as schooling? Right, so you're in your lift, you've got the two guys there and we'd like you to put those issues forward.

PHIL TOMKINSON: Okay. When I went talking to other parents, looking for this big idea because I actually didn't have one of my own, rather than getting the big idea from people, the concept that was really intriguing people were these two people who were stuck in the lift. And a lot of people were saying, "For God's sake, don't open the door". And there was also some, like one of the issues in the disability sector that parents talk about is discrimination and that was put forward too, that if I did get the door open I should also open a window and give both of them the opportunity to hit the ground at approximately the same time and the same place. There were some other more physical suggestions like, seeing there were no witnesses, what I could do to these two people.

But that prompted what we eventually come up with, and I have to just briefly give credit to Professor Jackson from Edith Cowan who was in town recently and provided some of the seeds that some of this has come from. Bear in mind this is coming from parents and it may not fit what you're expecting in the big idea, in that it's very grass roots and it is coming from where people are at at the moment. But anyway, this is what my instructions are to tell them:

That we have a vision of a society where peace and tolerance are valued and promoted, one where all people are included in all aspects of life and discrimination and exclusionary practices are in their rightful place with other relics of bygone eras.

We recognise the ideological nature of this statement and know this cannot be achieved overnight or ever achieved at all but we're convinced of the need to put our feet on the path that actively promotes peace and tolerance. There are some things governments can do to support this. In our view, education is an essential step in building a peaceful and tolerant society. Inclusionary practices in our schools are an important first step towards our goal.

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Many of the changes we want support productivity increases that are so valued by governments with a strong economic focus. When parents are no longer obliged to live under the restrictive contracts forced on them as a condition of their child's enrolment, they will take a more active role in the workforce. When we no longer need to drive our children past three or four perfectly good schools to get to the only school that does not act aggressively, discourage enrolment of students with disabilities, our productivity will be greater. When we spend less time in endless meetings with school staff or having to write lengthy justifications to obtain our choice of school, both parents and teachers will be more productive.

We cannot accept that it is right we should have to beg to have our children accepted into a school in their own community, nor should we have to clutter up the legal system with complaints to obtain this. An inclusive education system we hope will lead to a more inclusive workforce. The current enthusiasm for moving people from the disability support pension will have no value for many unless the workplace is willing to make the changes to accommodate workers with disabilities. Those who have seen and experienced those changes being made during their school years will have less difficulty with them in the workplace.

This is addressed to the Premier:

There have been a few well publicised incidents where government funded services for people with disabilities have been found to be subjecting people to abuse, assault and neglect. We are aware that there are a number of Bribie Island care type places out there that have not yet had their practices exposed to public scrutiny. Again, those who have seen the values of acceptance and tolerance modelled through their school years will be less likely to partake or tolerate others partaking in subjecting vulnerable people to such abuses. Thank you.

TERRY KEARNEY: Phil, thank you very much for that. And I want to pick up on that key issue of inclusive education, therefore inclusive workforce, therefore an inclusive society, okay, and holding that as a theme. And I'd just like to currently grab that theme and get people to hold it and go to Wayne in his introduction as a principal of a special facility and get that perspective and then come back to Bruce's question, therefore what does schooling look like, which we'll open up. Wayne, can I throw to you?

WAYNE WILKINSON: I must confess, when invited to be a panellist, it wasn't the notion of being stuck in the lift that grabbed me, it really was the theme, learning for social change. So in responding to the personally unlikely hypothetical, I will enjoy directing some thoughts to the big issues for learning for social change. My thoughts relate specifically to our government's provision of services and supports to school students with disabilities, their families and the wide array of services that are provided.

In relation to the delivery of services for students with disabilities, learning for social change inevitably challenges us to add value to what currently exists. My wish for social change to current practices assumes that we can do better and I believe we can. As a smart state, I'm also assuming that any quest to improve the quality of what we do and how we do it will always be valued by our government. So with a few minutes stuck in this hypothetical lift, I'll frame my wish for change in the following way:

What is happening now in regard to service delivery needs for students with disabilities and their families? A very brief snapshot, many parents of a child with a disability communicate to me and to my staff, frustrations in working with a number of government departments and service providers to seek basic support and advice.

Many families require support to maintain quality of life for their child and their other family members, for example, things as simple as after school hours care; medical and

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therapy support; respite care; family counselling; recreation and leisure options; support and family networks; access to appropriate resources; education and training.

Many parents and staff often experience the bureaucratic inefficiencies and, I think, fairly clear demarcations at times when seeking to organise services and supports for students with disabilities. They often find themselves in the bureaucratic maze with many giving up their pursuit for accessing support options. Schools often become a venting point for some of this frustration. Although school staff may understand and empathise with parent concerns, school staff are often unable to assist parents in managing many of the broader inter-departmental complexities involved in supporting students with disabilities.

School staff find themselves reinforcing the maze that surrounds service provision to students with disabilities and their families by limiting our sight – and I guess a point that Bruce has challenged – by limiting our sight to education. At this stage schools are not locations for important additional services and supports. Tracking personal, social and financial costs of supporting students with a disability can vary extensively and in some case studies in our schools, there are students, in terms of the inter-departmental support that's required, well exceeding \$100,000 per annum per child.

Using limited resources to provide the best outcomes for students with disabilities and their families remains a contentious debate. Simply providing more of the same current practice, I would argue, may not be a satisfactory solution. So in terms of our school's proposition, it's fairly simple. It's by combining our government's collective expertise, commitment to excellence, budgets and accountability frameworks, we would suggest, we can provide a better service delivery for students with disabilities and their families. This improved service delivery will lead to improved learning and social outcomes for students with disabilities, their families and the community.

So I guess what I would be putting forward is the need to rethink, redesign and rebuild specialist service provisions for students with disabilities is a current learning and social change quest for our school community. The quality of long term service delivery for students with disabilities and their families will be dependent upon how effectively, I believe, a number of government departments understand, manage, coordinate, communicate and deliver necessary services and supports.

We believe new and exciting and possibly (smart partnerships) within and between state departments eg, Queensland Health, Education, Disability Services, Communities, Employment and Training, are necessary to improve service delivery and support to a large number of students with disabilities and their families throughout our region. We would argue that new and streamlined bureaucratic processes and practices, line management protocols and new public understanding about service delivery and support, options for students with disabilities, are necessary.

New thinking is critical to enable traditional service delivery models to be reconceptualised between departments. A significant amount of work and effective leadership is necessary to develop a future best practice model to appropriately service and support these students. Focus must be on improving and managing outcomes. A whole of government strategy, we would argue, is clearly essential.

What could it look like? A smart partnership between Education Queensland, Disability Services, Health, Communities, Employment Training, is established in that we actually do provide some new service delivery models. For students with disabilities and their families it could mean: appropriate educational after school hours facilities and resources; access to specialist educational, social and medical support services; to provide a community hub for specialist service providers working with students with disabilities, their families and the community; establish local disability specific research and provide under-graduate training; provide family and community care, counselling and support services.

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What needs to happen? Well, unfortunately I think many of us know that learning and knowledge alone are insufficient to create social change, to change our own personal behaviour or to improve our practice. If learning is to lead to social change that will improve service delivery outcomes in this state, I would suggest the following may be critical elements: clear costing evidence and mapping of current service delivery concerns for students with disabilities be provided to our Premier outside of the lift context. A shared commitment and vision to developing co-leadership strategies among our senior executives, expertise to understand and achieve desired service delivery outcomes and finally, a commitment from our public service sector to desire learning for social change, to translate that change into improved service delivery outcomes, change in its very essence is about moving from one position to another, it's about development.

So if I had that unlikely scenario I would provide probably a few of those sorts of thoughts to the two men in the lift.

TERRY KEARNEY: Thank you. Just in summary I'm going to pick up on Bruce's comment, I'm going to come back to each of the four members and say, you've got just one sentence, right, before I open up there's just one sentence to describe the concept of schooling in 15 years. So to each of you, one sentence, schooling in 15 years.

Just wanted to pick up, any questions, any comment around the concept of – Phil's comments around disability and the call for inclusion, from school right through to society and then Wayne's comment about the way cross-functional service delivery has to change. Comment? I think they're very well made and very clear points that are just on the table and should be noted and should be recorded.

Okay, in summary, we have one minute. So it's a sentence each and Tony, you're first. Schooling, 15 years.

TONY McGRUTHER: Schools that are designed to fit kids, not fit kids into schools, therefore a focus on human development - the design of learning should be around human development and using what is technology and the resources of today.

TERRY KEARNEY: Thank you. Les, one sentence, we're running down in time.

LES HOOPER: It's going to be complex sentence, Terry. A couple of very, very quick things, what should they look like? Take up on Bruce's point, that the basis is about dialogue. There should be a hell of a lot more dialogue and less emphasis on end product, that we should have a far less monolithic kind of model for what education should be like.

TERRY KEARNEY: Excellent. Phil?

PHIL TOMKINSON: One sentence? Yes, I'll stick with my original theme and say an inclusive school that meets the needs of the community in which it's located.

TERRY KEARNEY: Inclusion in the community, excellent. Wayne?

WAYNE WILKINSON: Well, our school is not defined by buildings and boundaries so I would suggest that schools of the future have less boundaries and are certainly far more involved in the community and the community involved in the school.

TERRY KEARNEY: It's been an amazing part of my career to try to redefine the concept of "place" in the context of learning. This has been a place of learning. And I wonder why we do have to have walls and buildings to do such stuff. But that's another issue. Can I ask you to join with me to thank Tony, Wayne, Les and Phil for their insights today.

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Ladies and gentlemen, the lift has opened, you've got a five minute break before it reconvenes. Thank you.

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