



## **RACHEL NOLAN MP**

### **Member for Ipswich**

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#### **STATE MPs RESPOND TO AIR CONDITIONING CALLS**

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Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan and Member for Ipswich West Don Livingstone today said they would continue to support schools in their fundraising efforts in light of the call from some schools for classrooms to be air conditioned.

The MPs said they had raised this issue with the Minister for Education over the years.

“There is no doubt that in the kind of extremely hot days we are having right now, it is harder for teachers to teach and for kids to learn,” Ms Nolan said.

“Don and I went to school in the local area and we are well aware of the conditions.”

Member for Ipswich West Don Livingstone said that the State Government did have a program to air condition schools but that its focus was obviously to do the hottest and most humid areas of the state first.

“The original program started in 1996 in Far North Queensland for schools north of Bowen and provided schools with \$2 for every \$1 they raised to go towards air conditioning,” Mr Livingstone said.

“In 1998 the Beattie Government increased the subsidy to \$4 for every \$1 raised and extended the program South to include Gladstone, Biloela and Theodore, and west to the Great Divide.”

Ms Nolan said that she thought most reasonable people would agree with the focus on air conditioning schools in the hottest and most humid regions.

“Yes, the state Government is air conditioning schools in the Cooler Schools eligibility zone. It’s an extremely expensive exercise which cannot currently be justified in areas where the very hot days only occur for a few weeks around the start and the end of the school year.

“The Cooler Schools program represents a significant investment of public funds, with about \$129 million spent and committed on school air-conditioning since 1998 in the hottest and most humid parts of the State. In the election our Government committed a further \$17.6 million to the program.