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7 June 2005

New Preschool officially opened at St Mary's Primary School, Ipswich

Ipswich's oldest non-state primary school has unveiled its latest facilities.

St Mary's Primary School's new preschool was officially opened today by Member for Ipswich Rachel Nolan on behalf of Education Minister Anna Bligh.

Ms Nolan said the \$384,728 development would accommodate Preschool classes until the Prep Year was introduced at the school in 2007.

"The project involved the refurbishment of existing Year 1 classrooms in the wing of the Early Years Centre, one of the school's oldest buildings, which was built in the 1880s," she said.

"There is something rather poignant about a preschool being built within a heritage-listed building; it's a case of the old embracing the new, the past supporting the future."

Ms Nolan said St Mary's Primary School had a growing reputation as a technologically advanced learning environment that was preparing students for the 21st century.

"All classrooms at the school, including the new preschool facilities, are connected to the Internet, and the school boasts a state-of-the-art robotics room and multi-media library," she said.

"The first step in preparing students for the modern age is preparing them for their education, and that is where the new Prep Year fits in."

There are currently 96 schools, 13 of which are Catholic schools, delivering Prep in Queensland. A further 25 schools, including three more Catholic schools, will join the trial next year. Prep will be offered statewide in 2007.

Ms Nolan said a new kitchen and student amenities were also constructed as part of the Preschool development.

The State Government provided \$349,448 in Preparatory Year capital works funding to refurbish the classrooms. The Federal Government contributed \$35,280.

Approximately \$25,000 in improvements to the playground area was also completed, funded by the school community.