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\$50 MILLION FUNDING BOOST FOR STATE SCHOOLS

Eleven state schools in the Ipswich electorate will share in a total of \$529,100 as part of a \$50 million commitment by the Beattie Government to improve facilities for students.

Premier Peter Beattie announced today that each of Queensland's 1276 state schools would receive funds for local projects through a \$50 million School Community Development Fund.

"It will be up to the school community how this money is spent in partnership with the principal and within some very flexible guidelines," Mr Beattie said.

"This is an opportunity for parents to get involved with their school and influence their children's learning environment.

"There's a great degree of scope – it depends on what the school P & C considers most important.

"It could involve installing water tanks, upgrading the library, refitting the science lab or putting in playground equipment.

"The amount of the grant is determined by a combination of factors, including the size of the school, the enrolments and the locality.

"I want to stress these grants do not replace our existing capital works or maintenance programs – they are part of our long-term commitment to modernise state schools.

"Under our *'Tomorrow's Schools'* program, we are committing \$1 billion over the next five years to upgrade our state schools, and these grants are part of that commitment."

Member for Ipswich, Rachel Nolan, welcomed the Premier's commitment, saying it would provide a tremendous boost to local schools.

"This is great news for our principals, teachers and especially parents and children," Ms Nolan said.

"It provides parents with an unprecedented opportunity to have a direct say in the future of facilities at their child's school."

The \$50 million School Community Development Fund is part of the Beattie Government's \$1 billion program *'Tomorrow's Schools – Providing for a Smarter Future'*.

The investment over the next five years is the most comprehensive school renewal program ever undertaken in Queensland.

It includes spending of \$850 million to upgrade existing infrastructure and provide new facilities where needed.

A one-off immediate payment of \$100 million has been made as part of the program to Catholic and Independent schools to support urgent capital programs and new technologies.