**DG Message transcript: May 2022**

Hello.

I hope all of you are keeping well as we near the halfway mark of the 2022 school year.

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, seas and waterways across Queensland. And I extend my respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

This month I’ll share the recent trips I made to schools in the Metro, Darling Downs and North Queensland regions. It really is encouraging to see the excellent teaching and learning occurring in some of our most remote and isolated schools, through to central Brisbane.

In Metro, I visited Cannon Hill, Albany Creek, Coorparoo and Brighton schools, as well as the Red Hill Special School.

The love these school principals have for their jobs, staff, community and, most importantly, their commitment to the students, was truly awe-inspiring.

I heard about the genuine collaboration happening between these schools, where the principals were focussed on how to better serve the broader community – looking beyond their own schools - to ensure all students have access to the best teachers possible.

I was seriously impressed by the work taking place at the Red Hill Special School, which has some of our most vulnerable students, yet every one of them is given the opportunity to fully realise their potential.

In between the Metro school visits, I ventured 500km to see some of our regional state schools in the Darling Downs South West region. These were Dulacca, Drillham, Miles, Meandarra, Glenmorgan and Surat, plus the Roma Centre for Learning and Wellbeing.

Our schools in rural and regional Queensland have their own unique challenges and opportunities and I commend these school leaders and staff for their commitment in supporting every student to progress.

It was wonderful to see, first hand, Dulacca State School’s recently introduced State Delivered Kindergarten Program, which now means local children have a great early start to their education.

Again, something that stood out for me, was the collaboration taking place – both among schools themselves, and with local community business partnerships. Miles State High School’s Trade Training Centre is a perfect example of how strong partnerships with business and industry enables students to obtain qualifications in construction and engineering, leading them to gain local employment or go on to other higher education opportunities. The students were extremely articulate: sharing what they were learning, how they were applying it, and the opportunities that lay ahead.

I finished my travels in North Queensland, where I had the pleasure of visiting the Mt Isa School of the Air, the Mt Isa Centre for Learning and Wellbeing and Happy Valley, Barkly Highway and Mornington Island state schools, along with Mt Isa Day Nursery.

Mt Isa School of the Air is doing amazing work - ensuring all students have access to a quality education.

It was an absolute delight to visit Mt Isa Day Nursery and see how these young children are being well prepared for future success. It’s not always easy to get qualified early childhood teachers in certain areas of the state, yet our initiatives to address these issues are clearly working.

I want to make special mention of our staff working in discrete communities, such as Mornington Island. They’ve made a personal choice to make a difference in these areas, while also being personally enriched through the experience.

It’s important for me to visit these communities so I can more fully understand the challenges and, as a result, be better placed to help bring greater equity to the system and, in particular, to our First Nations people.

To genuinely comprehend the day-to-day reality of how staff live in these communities, I opted to stay in teacher accommodation on the island. I’d like to make special mention of Mayor Kyle. He was very generous with his time, knowledge and vision for a brighter future.

Despite the vastness of this state and the distance between some of the communities, these schools exemplify a fierce commitment to ensuring equity and excellence and realising the potential of their students.

I look forward to engaging with more of you, and exploring how all of us can play our part to ensure we are giving students throughout this state the best education possible. The more candid you are, the better the experience for me. This helps me to represent our work authentically and help to steer our system on the course of continuous improvement.