



**Adrian Pederick MP**  
Member for Hammond

## HANSARD

House of Assembly  
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### LAMEROO REGIONAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:32):** I rise today to speak about the devastating fire that caused, I believe, at least \$1½ million worth of damage to the Lameroo Regional Community School. The Lameroo school is a terrific community school which has strong academic tradition extending back to 1906, when the school was first opened in the Methodist Church Hall.

In 1990, after various iterations of a school, the Lameroo Regional Community School was established. This came about with the amalgamation of the secondary sections from the Pinnaroo, Geranium and Lameroo schools. Currently, there are approximately 180 students in attendance at Lameroo, with children travelling in from as far away as Geranium and Pinnaroo—up to 40 kilometres away—so this is essential schooling for our Mallee students.

On that fateful morning of Friday 4 October, during the school holidays, students, staff, parents and the local community were informed of the fire. These were obviously the ones who had not seen it happen. The blaze fully destroyed the technical studies, home economics, science and art rooms and very close to 100 per cent of the work these rooms contained.

I could not get to the school on that Friday, but I did have some contact with one of the local parents. I managed to get up to the school the next afternoon, a Saturday afternoon, and had a very fruitful meeting with some of the parents and some of the schoolteachers who were around so that I could get my own overview of the damage that had happened to the school—and it was significant.

I said at the time, 'I'm not a building inspector or an engineer, but I think that it's a bulldozer job.' Thankfully, from what I have been informed by the regional director, David Craig (I had a conversation with him only yesterday), the place will be bulldozed in the next fortnight and there will be new buildings on the same footprint. I fully commend that, and I will be watching that with interest over the next year or so—hopefully, it is sooner than that—to see that we have these buildings built back on the same footprint, with even better facilities than what was there.

It certainly impacted senior students at the school because a lot of the year 12 work has gone; it was in these rooms. Thankfully, the SACE Board is being receptive and will use photo evidence and teachers' professional opinions to make sure that students' final marks accurately reflect their work throughout the year.

It has certainly devastated the community to see what has happened with these school buildings. However, it is great to hear reports that Lameroo locals have rallied together to help the school in any way. Classes will be rotated round the town and the local bowling club and community hall will be utilised for some home economics classes. Local churches and community groups have also raised small funding support to assist the school and the students, whose lockers were destroyed. This is a small but generous gesture towards the rebuilding process.

I must pay tribute to the many CFS volunteers, which included CFS volunteers from Lameroo, Pinnaroo and Parilla, who worked hard to contain the fire, some in breathing apparatus, to stop it from spreading to other buildings.

When you hear of these things that happen in school holidays, you think that a firebug has been in, but it was an electrical fault. I know that there is nothing great to celebrate around that or around anything about a fire, but the fire cause investigators found that it was started by an electrical fault, so I guess that there is something heartening in knowing that. I note that a media story only this week stated:

At an assembly yesterday morning, principal Carissa Coleman's voice wavered as she apologised to senior students whose work had been lost. She said the SACE Board would use photo evidence and teachers' professional opinions to make sure students' final marks accurately reflected their work throughout the year.

The senior school coordinator, Julia Brookes, assured the students that none would be disadvantaged. I wish the school community and the town all the best in the rebuild of these school buildings. I will be watching with interest to see that the community get the outcome they deserve. Time expired.

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