



Member for Fraser Andrew Leigh at the Blue Gum Community School which received more than \$1 million in BER funding. Picture: Elesa Lee

Funding helps Blue Gum stick to Hackett

By Mark Sawa

AFTER 14 years of uncertainty and a point of near closure the Blue Gum Community School in Hackett has announced it finally has a home.

It has just opened a spectacular array of new facilities including refurbished classrooms and administration area, new kitchen facilities and a remarkable new playground thanks to \$1.075 million in Building the Education Revolution funding.

Blue Gum executive director Maureen Hartung said after moving several times the school gradually took over their current location.

"We've now got a long term lease and are in the process of purchasing this building," she said.

"We are home permanently for the next however many decades we are here. It's great because the Hackett residents had been without a local

school for 20 to 25 years before we came here and there were plans for this building to be demolished."

She said the BER funding had solved their intractable problem of securing a permanent location.

"We were in different buildings on short leases ... but with short term leases you can't get capital works funding to build permanent buildings," Ms Hartung said. "But without a permanent building you can't get off the short term leases so it was a catch 22."

She said they wanted to use the funding to create an environment that stimulated the imagination and challenged students. One of those environments was a playground with a difference.

Landscape architect Rob Wilson said the natural theme gave children a chance to create their own play.

"With this they do their own thing, they create their own imaginative place," he said.

Member for Fraser Andrew Leigh said the new facilities would bring benefits to students for years to come.

"Having so much of the beautiful facilities here come to life is great," Dr Leigh said.

He congratulated Blue Gum Community School and the local community for their efforts in delivering this historic investment to their school.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for the whole Hackett community to come together and celebrate the new facilities," he said.

"The BER is a \$16.2 billion investment in the nation's future and is delivering modern facilities to more than 9500 schools in metro and regional communities.

"It is the single biggest investment in Australian schools in our history."

The government's investment has resulted in libraries, science labs, classrooms and multipurpose halls being built across the country.

"They are changing the way our students learn and giving teachers and staff a more enjoyable place to work," Dr Leigh said.

"The bricks and mortar of these buildings are merely the foundations on which long term educational benefits will be built."

The school is split into two campuses with K-10 at Hackett and preschool children at Dickson.

Next month the school's new library on the Dickson campus is expected to be finished.