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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**Date: Friday 13 January 2012**

**For immediate release**

### **END OF AN ERA AT EAST PALMERSTON STATE SCHOOL**

Hinchinbrook MP, Andrew Cripps, has expressed his deep sadness and regret following advice that East Palmerston State School is not likely to open for Semester 1 2012 as a result of no students enrolling and said it was the end of an era for the local community.

Mr Cripps said while a viable number of students had attended East Palmerston State School in 2011, some families leaving the district had forced others to consider the interests of their children and enrolled elsewhere to ensure they had a place to attend school in 2012.

"It is always unfortunate to see a school close, especially one with such a long history as East Palmerston State School. I have very much enjoyed taking an active part in the life of the school and visiting it regularly. However, it is clear that presently, the lack of any enrolments at all make it impossible to justify the school remaining open" said Mr Cripps.

"I am a strong supporter of the schools in the Hinchinbrook electorate. I have previously fought hard to defend East Palmerston State School and support the Parents and Citizens Association from inappropriate viability reviews undertaken by Education Queensland, which caused a lot of uncertainty amongst the school community at the time" he said.

"I understand Education Queensland staff will attend East Palmerston State School on the first day of Semester 1 this year to see if any students arrive, but at the moment, my advice is that there are no enrolments. The school is likely to be 'moth-balled' in the short term and if there is no prospect of it re-opening in the future, it will probably be sold" said Mr Cripps.

"I am very aware that the school has been a cornerstone of the local community since it was first opened in 1938. After 73 years of educating young people in the East Palmerston area, losing the school will be difficult, not just for former students and staff, but many locals, because the school was a focal point and a hub for social and community events" he said.

Mr Cripps said he had written to Education Queensland requesting that an appropriate community event be held at East Palmerston State School to recognise the end of an era in education at a small rural school that had played an important role in the local community.

**ENDS**

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