New era for Mount St Bernard

BRAND new facilities at Mount St Bernard College were officially opened on Fri-day.

North Queensland Senator Ian Macdonald did the hon-ours.

Facilities include new boys’ and girls’ boarding houses, learning centre, student servi-ces offices, technology class-rooms, staff facilities and woodwork area.

Senator Macdonald said the Australian Government pro-vided more than $31 million for the school’s new state-of-the-art facilities.

“The Coalition Government is committed to investing in our schools to ensure all stu-dents, regardless of where they live, are able to access the same standard of educational facili-ties,” he said. “I am pleased to see the bar being set so high here in Herberton.”

Cairns Bishop James Foley attended with Fr Bony Abra-ham to officially bless and open each of the new build-ings.

Principal David Finch said the school was particularly proud to open its transition house.

“It’s a really innovative way to help our kids, especially our indigenous students, make the transition from home to boarding,” Mr Finch said.

“Most of our kids are board-ers, we have about 229 kids all up, 170 of which are boarders.

“The majority are indigen-ous and come from the Torres Straight, the Cape area and the territory.”

“So the idea of the transi-tion house is to have parents here living with students as they adjust and its worked won-derfully, we’ve had more than 50 families use it so far this year.

“We use it for orientation weeks and, if we have students struggling to settle in or need a time out, they can get their mum or family members to come down to be with them.”

Mr Finch said two boarding supervisors stayed in the back-rooms of the house.

“Because we are so cultural-ly diverse, we make a big effort to be considerate of everyone’s differences,” he said.

“We have fairly young indi-genous boarders coming in for grade eight and I know home-sickness and separation from family can be a difficult thing to deal with for them.

“By doing our best to help with that, we ensure students are in the best position to learn in the classroom.”

Senator Macdonald said the whole school community would benefit from the invest ment.

“It’s great to be able to see first-hand today the impact these new facilities are already having,” he said.

“Schools are not only about the bricks and mortar, it’s about ensuring both teachers and students are engaged in the learning process. From what I’ve seen here today, that is certainly being achieved at Mount St Bernard College.”

He said total Common-wealth funding to all schools across Queensland would in crease by $908 million, a 2.5 per cent increase from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

“The Coalition is the only party with a fully funded and affordable plan that ensures money is directed where it’s most needed and focuses on proven measures that will im-prove outcomes in literacy, numeracy, STEM subjects, and prepare students for the jobs of the future,” Senator Macdonald said.

HERBERTON Men’s Shed will receive $6300 from the Turnbull Government to con-tinue to promote and support men’s health and wellbeing in the Kennedy electorate.

LNP candidate for Kennedy Jonathan Pavetto said the grant would supply and install electrical equipment and elec-trical connection for lighting and power points at the Men’s Shed facility.

Under the National Shed Development Program, the Turnbull Coalition has pro-vided the Australian Men’s Shed Association with allocat-ed funding of $800,000 this fi-nancial year with a funding pool of $400,000 per round.

This program allows Men’s Sheds and organisations sup-porting a Men’s Shed to apply for funds to respond to local needs.

“The community benefits from the projects undertaken in the sheds and family ties are becoming stronger with happe-ner and quieter men,” Mr Pav etto said.

Another funding round is expected to be called soon.

Visit: www.mensshed.org

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT AUSTRALIAN MEN’S SHED ASSOCIATION VIA EMAIL AT AMSA@AMENS- SHED.NET OR PHONE 1300 550 009.