## New era for Mount St Bernard

## Natasha Emeck

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

North Queensland Senator Ian Macdonald did the honours

Facilities include new boys' and girls' boarding houses, learning centre, student services offices, technology classrooms, staff facilities and woodwork area.

Senator Macdonald said the Australian Government provided more than \$5.1 million for the school's new state-ofthe-art facilities.

"The Coalition Government is committed to investing in our schools to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are able to access the same standard of educational facilities," he said. "I am pleased to see the bar being set so high here in Herberton."

Cairns Bishop James Foley attended with Fr Bony Abraham to officially bless and open each of the new build-

Pincipal 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.



Father Bony Abraham, Bishop James Foley, Senator Ian Macdonald and Mount St Bernard principal David Finch officially opened six new facilities in the school last Friday. Picture: Natasha Emeck

"Most of our kids are boarders, we have about 220 kids all up, 170 of which are boarders.

"The majority are indigenous and come from the Torres Straight, the Cape area and the territory

"So the idea of the transition house is to have parents here living with students as mum or family members to they adjust and its worked wonderfully, 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

come down to be with them."

Mr Finch said two boarding supervisors stayed in the backrooms of the house.

Because we are so culturally diverse, we make a big effort to be considerate of everyone's differences," he said.

"We have fairly young indigenous boarders coming in for grade eight and I know homesickness 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-

"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 Commonwealth funding to all schools across Queensland would increase by \$908 million, a 27.5 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 improve outcomes in literacy, numeracy, STEM subjects, and prepare students for the jobs of the future," Senator Macdonald said.

## **Men's Shed** a success in **Herberton**

HERBERTON Men's will receive \$6300 from the Turnbull Government to continue 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 electrical connection for lighting and power points at the Men's Shed facility.

Under the National Shed Development Program, the Turnbull Coalition has provided the Australian Men's Shed Association with allocated funding of \$800,000 this financial year with a funding pool of \$400,000 per round.

This program allows Men's Sheds and organisations supporting a Men's Shed to apply for funds to better respond to local needs.

"The community benefits from the projects undertaken in the sheds and family ties are becoming stronger with happier and healthier men," Mr Pavetto said.

Another funding round is expected to be called soon. Visit: www.mensshed.org

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT AUS-TRALIAN MEN'S SHED ASSOCIATION **VIA EMAIL AT AMSA@MENS-SHED.NET OR PHONE 1300 550** 

