Isaacs Electorate: St Louis de Montfort's Primary School
Mr DREYFUS (Isaacs) (10:37): I rise to commend St Louis de Montfort's Primary School in Aspendale for the wonderful environmental-learning opportunities they are providing students through their 'sustainability precinct' that includes a vegetable garden, orchard, chicken coop and student kitchen. St Louis de Montfort's Primary School has grown considerably since its first classrooms were constructed in 1964. The school now has an enrolment of around 760 students and has become an integral part of the Aspendale community.

On Tuesday 18 February I visited the school to present leadership certificates to their year 6 students and to review their sustainability precinct that was commissioned in April 2013. Mrs Julie Wynne and some of the student leaders took me on a tour of the student kitchen and garden to see their sustainability curriculum being taught. Mrs Sue Crisp was bringing maths to life through a cooking class in the well-equipped kitchen made from converted shipping containers. It was evident that the students were thoroughly enjoying learning about fractions by measuring ingredients for their apple crumbles.

Just outside the kitchen another class of students was actively helping the school gardener, Mr Frank Overberg, in St Louis de Montfort's beautiful sustainability garden. The garden has an extensive vegetable patch, a small orchard, a coop for chickens and geese, a rabbit hutch, a worm farm and a soon-to-be-inhabited aviary. Old tyres have been recycled, to construct seating for a small amphitheatre. Extensive plantings of native plants indigenous to the Aspendale area are planned.

Through the integrated sustainability garden and kitchen, students learn about concepts such as permaculture, aquaponics, nutrition and how to identify indigenous edible plants. As I spoke with the students, it was obvious that this applied approach to environmental curriculum has deeply engaged their learning and taught them an appreciation for the land and living sustainably in our fragile Australian environment.

St Louis de Montfort's students have found a very creative way to raise money to continue maintaining and extending the garden and have launched a 'Sponsor a Worm' program. I was happy to assist as their first sponsor, and I can report that the school now has a worm called Isaacs. I congratulate the school principal, Mr Tom Lindeman, and the St Louis de Montfort community on this wonderful educational initiative. Sustainability should be an increasingly important part of all Australian students' learning as we grapple with how best to care for our land and protect it for future generations. St Louis de Montfort's primary school can be proud of taking the lead in developing and trialling applied environmental education through their sustainability kitchen and garden.