




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

STEM in Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.52 am): Last week was National Science Week—a great time to celebrate all things STEM in our schools. There is a lot to celebrate when it comes to STEM in our Queensland schools. Science, technology, engineering and mathematics are becoming increasingly popular subjects for Queensland students, and rightly so. We want more Queensland students to pursue the subjects that will set them up for the jobs of the future.

Just as we have been encouraging students to embrace STEM studies, we are doubling our efforts to attract more teachers into the STEM fields. The Palaszczuk government is proactively ensuring we have the teachers we need for the future. We have provided more than 3,000 teachers with professional development to increase their STEM teaching capability. We have employed STEM champions in every education region to support STEM capability in schools. These champions play a vital role connecting groups of schools to industry partners. Our Step into STEM scholarship program helped professionals working in the field of STEM to transition into teacher. This year we introduced the rural and remote STEM graduate scholarships which identify dedicated graduate teachers to teach STEM in rural or remote communities.

This year's budget announced \$81.3 million to develop STEM skills in primary school teachers and to improve students' achievement and engagement in their STEM learning. During the 2017 election campaign our government committed to hiring 3,700 new teachers for Queensland classrooms over four years. We have already employed more than 1,000 of those new teachers.

The growing demand in STEM is a result of all the great work schools are doing to promote these subject areas, with national-leading initiatives for students to embrace STEM. Baringa State Primary School is our first STEM school of excellence. The Premier and I officially opened the school near Caloundra recently.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms GRACE: Then I will definitely make sure that it happens in 2021. We were welcomed by Pepper, a robot programmed by the students. We established STEM academies and the STEM Girl Power Camp and the Robotics Lending Library. We are also expanding the Queensland Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology, located at Toowong, to accept year 7 students from 2019. Through the Premier's Creating Queensland's Future coding competition students are showcasing their programming skills by creating innovative digital solutions to real world challenges, like bullying.

The 2018 Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in STEM Education honoured 16 senior students for their academic achievements in STEM subjects. I congratulate each and every one of them. Through the Palaszczuk government's commitment to STEM the future is bright for Queensland state school students. It is full STEM ahead.