




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Merrimac State High School, World Robot Summit

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government is determined to ensure our young people develop the skills they need to fill the jobs of the future. That is why the Premier will be holding the skills summit at the end of the month, to meet with industry leaders so we can ensure we have the skilled workers for a global economy.

Robotics and coding are industries of the future, and it gives me great pleasure to advise the House that Queensland state school students continue to shine brightly on the world stage. I make special mention of Merrimac State High School on the Gold Coast—

Mr Stevens: Hear, hear!

Ms GRACE:—and congratulate it on its recent success at the World Robot Summit in Japan. I hear the member for Mermaid Beach. Having visited the students at the school in August, I was not surprised to hear that they had done so well. Not content with winning the World Robot Summit junior trial competition for robotic programming in Tokyo last year, Merrimac State High sent two teams of coding whiz-kids to Japan again this year, with both teams doing their state and their country proud yet again.

Team 1 had the unenviable task of designing and building their own robot and putting it through an obstacle course. After five days of competition the team was awarded the prize for the best coded and documented solution. Not to be outdone, team 2 took on the schools challenge, where they had to design and develop code to program a humanoid robot to assist student learning. These talented students developed their own extremely lengthy and detailed code to improve literacy and numeracy in the early years. For their efforts they were also given the award for outstanding code and documentation.

Mr Stevens: Congratulations to Mr Tobin.

Ms GRACE: I take the interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach congratulating them.

I am told that their coding was so complex and impressive that their efforts were recognised with a special award from the Japanese Society for Artificial Intelligence. They were also the talk of the SoftBank Corporation, the inventors of Pepper robot, when I met with them recently in Tokyo. They were blown away by what those students had done. They are now working with us here in Queensland to develop coding for Pepper to be used more fully as an educational tool in schools not only here in Queensland but also in Japan. We are progressing that. The students' success is not only a tribute to everyone at Merrimac; it is also a testament—

Mr Stevens: And the local member.

Ms GRACE:—to the support this government provides to my department's STEM team through the provision of Pepper robots and expert technical advice. I am not taking all of the interjections from the member for Mermaid Beach!

Queensland state schools are the beneficiaries of this government's commitment to coding and robotics, improving digital literacy of students through our \$660,000 robotics for the future lending library, which has enabled 65 state schools across Queensland to provide opportunities for their students to code humanoid robots in their classroom. There was no better example of this on display than when the Premier and I attended the official opening of the new \$34 million Baringa State Primary School in Caloundra, where Pepper, coded by those young state school students, welcomed the Premier and me to the event.