




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Schools, Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.52 am): Across the state in 2019 some 830,000 students have taken to the classroom, the state's highest ever overall enrolment count, with 560,000 attending state schools. Around 66,000 of these students are beginning their school career in prep. As well as being a special day for students, their parents and carers—

Ms Jones: My Gracie.

Ms GRACE: I take the interjection of the member for Cooper. Her Gracie was also one of those prep starters—

Dr Miles: And Bridie.

Ms GRACE:—and the Minister for Health's Bridie was also one of those. I will take any other interjections that people in the House have. Proud parents! To cater for the increase in enrolments, the Palaszczuk government is employing an additional 3,700 teachers over four years. This year we welcomed more than 1,500 new teachers to Queensland state schools, definitely putting us on track to meet our commitment. We have also employed more than 200 teacher aides, who are now supporting and working with students right across the state.

To mark the first day of the school year, I was very pleased to join the Premier and the member for Jordan at Queensland's newest state school, Spring Mountain, near Springfield. This impressive approximately \$40 million state-of-the-art facility will become the hub and deliver the future educational needs of this growing community.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering world-class infrastructure for our state schools. A further eight new schools will be built this year and will be ready for the start of the 2020 school year, with new high schools in Calliope, Coomera, Mango Hill, Yarrabilba, Providence at Ripley Valley and Fortitude Valley; a new primary school at Ripley Valley; and a new special school at Caboolture. In fact, I was proud to join the Premier and the member for Gladstone to turn the first sod on the construction of the new Calliope high school. It was great to see future students of the school lending a helping hand to turn the sod. I commend the member for Gladstone for his tireless advocacy for a new high school on behalf of the Calliope community, many of whom were on hand to toast with style.

This year there are a total of 43 locations offering the Palaszczuk government's remote kindergarten initiative, 14 of which are new to the program such as Baralaba, Callide and St Lawrence in Mirani. Without this initiative, these young Queenslanders would not be able to participate in a kindergarten program because they live in a very rural or remote location. Programs like this further demonstrate our commitment to giving Queensland kids a great start.