



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Oonoonba State School**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.06 am): I acknowledge that today is Purple Day for epilepsy. Many of us are wearing purple in honour of that day.

I am pleased to advise that the repair of Oonoonba State School in Townsville following the devastating flooding earlier this year is on track to be completed earlier than originally anticipated. Oonoonba was the worst hit of our state schools in the flooding emergency. The majority of its buildings were inundated with floodwaters causing significant damage to floors and walls as well as learning resources. It was clear that it would take considerable time to clean and make repairs to the school. To minimise the impact on students, my department acted quickly to implement temporary accommodation arrangements. Oonoonba students in prep to year 2 were warmly welcomed and accommodated at the nearby Wulguru State School, while students in years 3 to 6 were moved to William Ross State High School. I thank both schools for their support.

As soon as the floodwaters had receded, my department, in partnership with the Department of Housing and Public Works' Building and Asset Services, undertook a rapid damage assessment and immediately started work on the clean-up. To date significant work has been completed. This includes: repair of the main transformer and switchboard, allowing for the restoration of electricity; removal and replacement of floor coverings to all inundated buildings; replacement of information and communication technology; replacement of damaged fences; washing and repainting of all internal walls; and replacement of all toilet suites. To date, some 39 local businesses employing 185 local tradespeople have been involved in the school's restoration. Additionally, I am advised that six officers from the Department of Housing and Public Works' Building and Asset Services have been onsite coordinating the works and doing a great job.

The rectification work is on track to be completed before the end of the current school term. To celebrate this milestone, the school community will come together at the school on 5 April, the last day of the term. I am sure that Minister O'Rourke will be happy to be on site as the local member, and other members in Townsville may also pay a visit or two. This well-deserved and much anticipated celebration will be a testament to the resilience of the people of Townsville and the wonderful community spirit surrounding Oonoonba State School. Students will officially return to the campus on the first day of term 2—Tuesday, 22 April.

I again pay tribute to the entire Oonoonba State School community, officers from my department and the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Australian Defence Force and many others who have helped to reopen Oonoonba State School. I cannot wait to visit and personally thank all involved.