



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 April 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Federal Budget, Education Funding**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.56 am): Last night Treasurer Josh Frydenberg described education as the first defence of the nation and critical to our prosperity, harmony and advancement as a country. However, the budget papers reveal that these words are nothing but hollow rhetoric. The detail in the budget papers expose the Morrison government's failure in relation to providing fair, sector-blind education funding, including any increased funding for students with a disability—an absolute disgrace. Perhaps the greatest failure with regard to education funding is the lack of concrete, long-term funding commitment to universal access to kindergarten in the year before school. Instead, funding is only provided for yet another short-term, 12-month extension of the national partnership agreement. This will be the sixth short-term extension since 2013, when those opposite were in government.

Stakeholders across the early childhood sector, organisations such as Early Childhood Australia, the Australian Childcare Alliance and United Voice, have been united in their calls for the Morrison government to provide long-term funding certainty for early childhood. The Morrison government has again failed to respond on this important issue and after six years have failed to work with states on this vital issue. The budget also failed to provide Queensland's public schools with their fair share of additional funding similar to the \$1.2 billion slush fund being provided to non-government schools as a 'choice and affordability fund'. Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg have also failed to restore any of the \$2.1 billion that Queensland would have received had the federal government not terminated the national education reform agreement in 2017. This equates to a cut in funding of \$182 million for Queensland this year alone.

The devil is also in the detail when it comes to the new Local School Community Fund for upgrades to libraries, playgrounds and classrooms. The \$30 million fund—remember, they spent \$185 million opening and closing Christmas Island—equates to just \$200,000 per federal electorate. With some electorates home to up to dozens of schools, each school will be fighting over crumbs. It is a cruel insult. It is clear that the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government is incapable of ensuring Queensland gets its fair share of education funding. It is clear that only the election of a Labor government will do so.

Bill Shorten has already committed an extra \$650 million for Queensland state schools over three years from January 2020 and an additional \$300 million to ensure students with a disability get the support they need at school. Labor has also committed to a new five-year \$1.75 billion national partnership funding agreement for kindergartens and extending universal access to kindergarten for three-year-olds from 2021. Now that's a commitment! This is the long-term vision and funding commitment the sector has been crying out for and exactly what we need to give our kids a great start. The budget fails to reverse the LNP's cruel education cuts for our students, our teachers and our communities. Queensland deserves its fair share.