




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

STEM Education

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.01 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to giving Queensland kids the skills and knowledge they need for the jobs of the future. That is why we are so passionate about science, technology, engineering and mathematics—or STEM—and none more so than the Premier. The number of jobs in STEM fields is growing at more than twice the rate of that of other industries and occupations and we are seeing a major shift towards a knowledge-intensive economy, which means that the demand for STEM skills will only increase over time.

As a demonstration of our commitment, over the past two years the Palaszczuk government has invested \$83.2 million to support STEM education in Queensland. This investment funds initiatives such as the annual Premier's Coding Challenge, which was launched in February 2019, with entries closing on 2 September; the statewide robot lending library, including six Pepper and 10 NAO robots—and it is great to see them in use in schools throughout Queensland; our STEM Girl Power initiative to encourage girls to study senior STEM subjects and pursue a career in STEM; and the Peter Doherty Awards for Excellence in STEM Education.

We are also committed to increasing the capability of teachers in STEM subjects. We are investing \$81.3 million over four years to support STEM subject teaching and learning in all state primary schools. This funding can be used by schools to source expertise from local secondary schools, universities or industry or to gain access to the resources they need and to forge new partnerships to make STEM learning more engaging. Since 2016, we have seen more than 3,100 teachers participate in professional development to increase their STEM capability, especially in the area of maths, giving teachers the increased knowledge they need to be confident teaching STEM in our classrooms. We have also employed a STEM champion in every education region to support STEM capability in schools and funded scholarships for professionals working in STEM jobs to transition into teaching and teachers in rural and remote communities.

Our investment is paying dividends. For example, students from Merrimac State High School were presented with awards for the best coding and solution documentation at the 2018 World Robotic Summit in Tokyo. Both teams performed incredibly well and demonstrated their excellent skills in coding, engineering, developing logic and problem solving. Recently, it was great to welcome them to Parliament House. Sunnybank State High School, in the electorate of Toohy, was the winner of the national Education Innovation Award 2018 for their work in STEM. Springfield Central State School, in the electorate of Jordan, took out the Premier's Coding Challenge for 2018 in the years 3 and 4 category. We are giving our young people the skills and knowledge they need to become the global citizens of tomorrow and investing in STEM teacher skills and professional development.