



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Education, Federal Funding**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.31 am): On Saturday, Queenslanders will vote in the federal election at their local polling booth, many of which are located in local schools. It is an opportune reminder of what is at stake at this election when it comes to education. The Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison government ripped \$2.1 billion in education funding away from Queensland when in 2017 it tore up the National Education Reform Agreement. This equals a cut of \$182 million in funding for Queensland this year alone. Despite its hollow rhetoric about fair funding, the LNP created a \$1.2 billion slush fund for non-government schools in the Choice and Affordability Fund but failed to provide a similar funding boost for public schools. Perhaps the LNP's greatest failure with regard to education funding is the lack of a long-term funding commitment to universal access to kindergarten in the year before school. Instead, since 2013 we saw six short-term funding extensions—an absolute disgrace.

Queensland schoolchildren would be well served by the election of a Shorten Labor government. Bill Shorten has already committed nearly \$650 million for Queensland state schools over three years from January 2020. He has also committed to providing an additional \$300 million to ensure students with a disability get the support they need at schools—a great commitment. Labor has also committed to a new five-year \$1.75 billion national partnership funding agreement for kindergarten and extended universal access to kindergarten for three-year-olds from 2021. This is the long-term vision and funding commitment the sector has been crying out for and exactly what we need to give our children a great start in life.

The election is also a referendum on wages. Real wages have been stagnant for years, something of which the Morrison government is proud. Finance minister Mathias Cormann described this as a deliberate design feature of our economic architecture. Thousands of Queensland workers in retail and hospitality have been hit by the ongoing cuts to weekend penalty rates, straight cuts to take-home pay of up to \$6,000 a year for low-paid workers. Bill Shorten and federal Labor have made a commitment to restore penalty rates within 100 days of being elected and to establishing a national labour hire licensing scheme and a small claims jurisdiction along with the Fair Work Commission to give workers an easy path to claim unpaid wages and superannuation. This is great news for Queensland workers and for the almost 27,000 workers in the Central Queensland area who, as reported in the media today, are being robbed of their superannuation entitlement, worth around \$50 million per year. When it comes to matters of education and industrial relations, Queenslanders would be well served by the election of a Shorten Labor government. It is time.