



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 September 2019

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Townsville Schools, Flood Recovery**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.55 am): Schools in Townsville and the surrounding areas have bounced back following the floods earlier this year which saw significant damage to homes, businesses and community infrastructure such as schools. A total of 61 state schools were closed, impacting around 22,000 students and their families. Oonoonba State School was the hardest hit in the flooding event in Townsville, with all buildings inundated with floodwater. The school had to be closed from late January, with Wulguru State School and William Ross State High School hosting Oonoonba students until the beginning of term 2, and they did a great job! I was able to visit the school with the Premier immediately after the flooding to inspect the damage and to witness the amazing community spirit that Queenslanders are renowned for. I spoke to the principal of Oonoonba State School last night about the great work she and her team were doing to minimise the loss of learning time for students.

It was so heartening to see teachers, parents and carers, officers from the Department of Education and Department of Housing and Public Works and even the Australian Defence Force working to clean and repair the school. The statistics of the clean-up of schools in Townsville are astounding—2,100 square metres of new carpet was laid and 900 square metres of vinyl and 110 square metres of seamless flooring were replaced. The Department of Education's flood assistance package paid out close to \$1.5 million to families to support the replacement of school resources for some 10,000 students and a further \$215,000 has been paid to around 300 teachers who lost equipment and resources in the flood.

Despite all of the disruptions caused by the flooding, our teachers did a magnificent job minimising the impact on student learning, and congratulations to them for that. Some schools lost up to two weeks of learning time, but the teachers made up ground. Through the hard work and the dedication of these teachers, these students were able to catch up and be ready for annual NAPLAN testing, and I congratulate Queensland's most improved schools such as Townsville Central State School and Thuringowa State High School. Congratulations! I am looking forward to returning to Oonoonba State School later this week with the member for Mundingburra, Minister O'Rourke, to see how the school has recovered as we work towards giving every child a great start.