




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Advancing Clean Energy Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.54 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to a clean energy future for Queensland. That is why we have set a range of energy targets to increase the uptake of renewable energy sources and mitigate the effects of climate change. This includes a goal of one million Queensland rooftops with solar or 3,000 megawatts of total solar by 2020, as well as a 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030.

The Palaszczuk government's \$97 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools, ACES, program is a key part of our plan for a clean energy future. Queensland's state schools are one of our largest energy users—each year spending around \$70 million on electricity. ACES will help to reduce energy costs across more than 800 state schools through solar and energy efficiency measures. The ACES program will reduce energy costs and improve energy efficiency across Queensland state schools, contributing approximately 35 megawatts of solar towards the Palaszczuk government's goal.

This program is not just about generating clean energy. It is also about generating jobs for Queenslanders, with up to 320 jobs created over the life of the ACES program, including in our regional communities. When fully implemented we expect the energy cost savings through this program to be approximately \$10 million per year.

The ACES program is being delivered in three phases. Phase 1 is well underway. By the end of this financial year the ACES program will be rolled out in at least 210 schools. So far, we have completed more than half of the required school energy audits at more than 150 schools. These 150 audits include the development of detailed plans for tailored solar panel solutions and other identified energy efficiency needs for each individual school. I am pleased to advise that the bulk of the installation work for these 150 schools is scheduled to take place over the summer holidays to avoid disruption to classes. Teachers, students, parents and staff—and even local members—will see their brand-new rooftop solar panels on day 1 of the 2020 school year.

We have already installed around 2,400 solar panels on the rooftops of 30 schools and we are on target to see almost 34,000 panels installed by the end of June 2020 at over 210 schools. Phases 2 and 3 of the ACES program will roll out over the next three years. This is an outstanding Palaszczuk government initiative which is showing Queensland state school students and their communities our strong commitment to a cleaner, greener energy future and contributing to reaching our 50 per cent renewable target by 2030.