




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 26 November 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Schools, Air Conditioning

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.02 am): Yesterday I was delighted to attend with the Premier, Centenary State High School, in the electorate of Mount Ommaney, and with the hardworking local member Jess Pugh, who told me a story of how just last week she received a call from a constituent parent of a child at Centenary State High School asking the government to consider installing air conditioning at the school.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GRACE: Days later we were at the school making the announcement that we would fast-track \$50 million to put air conditioning—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I am not saying ‘Order’ for my benefit. I could not hear the minister’s contribution. I ask that you cease your interjections.

Ms GRACE: Days later we were at the school making the announcement that we would fast-track \$50 million to put air conditioning in classrooms outside the Cooler School zone, including at Centenary State High School.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders. I had just called the House to order and asked you to cease your interjections.

Ms GRACE: This school will have every classroom and learning space air-conditioned, along with 300 others in the hottest and humid communities—like Ipswich, Lockyer, Burnett, Inala, Logan, Moggill, the Scenic Rim, Gympie, Woodridge, Oakey, Bardon, Waterford, Ferny Grove, Everton, Bray Park and Nanango to mention a few. The full list is available on the Department of Education website.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: They hate good news.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders. Members to my left, if the interjections do not cease I will ask for silence during ministerial statements. The minister, as I hear her, is not being provocative. You may have a difference of opinion, but the minister is making a statement to the House.

Ms GRACE: This announcement is great news for students, teachers, teacher aides and staff. We are getting on with the job of delivering the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million commitment to air-condition state school classrooms. Most importantly, this program is also great news for jobseekers, with this announcement supporting more than 300 local jobs across the state and thousands of apprentice hours. For example, it was fantastic to meet Jill and Aidan from Chek, a local Ipswich air-conditioning company, who will benefit from our fast-tracked rollout. This local business had been awarded the contract at Ipswich State High School, which we announced would be air-conditioned in October. Jill and Aidan told me that engaging local businesses is a great benefit not only for them but also for the local community. Aidan has just completed his four-year apprenticeship and is guaranteed of a job with the company. Jill is already looking to engage local workers and apprentices to accommodate the extra work following this announcement.

Our decision to fast-track this \$50 million will bring forward this economic stimulus. I want to see the Department of Education and the 301 schools working together to get these units in as many state school classrooms as possible over the holiday break ready for the first day of school in 2020.

I would like to also acknowledge the fantastic work that has already been done by local P&Cs and school communities working with my department in the past to provide air conditioning in school classrooms. This fast-tracked government funding will now allow us to build on the great work that they have done and continue our fully funded and fiscally responsible approach to air conditioning in state schools outside the Cooler Schools zone.