




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 27 November 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Schools, Solar Energy

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.58 am): After Monday's announcement that we would air-condition every classroom in more than 300 additional state schools outside the Cooler Schools zone, one of the most common questions I have been asked is whether or not we are putting solar panels on schools to help deal with the additional power usage.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, the minister is not being controversial. I ask that the minister be heard.

Ms GRACE: According to their policy, Mr Speaker, they will get it after eight years.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: No. Order! Minister, I do not need any assistance in terms of keeping the House in order. I ask you to go back to your statement.

Ms GRACE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have good news for the people of Queensland: solar schools are smart schools. The Palaszczuk government's \$97 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools Program putting solar panels on schools is rolling out progressively across this state, with over 40 schools now completed. Phase 1 of the school audits has now been completed, identifying how the first 212 schools across Queensland will benefit.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: In addition to confirming the number of solar panels to be installed in each school, the audit also identified a range of other energy-saving measures such as hot-water system timers, sensor lighting and replacing fluorescent with LED lights. Just this week schools from Balmoral to Bargara and from Eagle Junction to Esk are installing solar panels on the roofs of classrooms and school buildings. More than 4,800 solar panels are now installed on Queensland state schools, with more than 1,400 installed in October alone. Another 3,477 are planned for November, with installations to ramp up over the Christmas holiday period.

Already, more than 1,400 kilowatts of solar power is being generated from the installed panels, and we are well on track to deliver almost 34,000 panels by the end of June 2020. By the time our program is completed we will have energy-saving solar panels on more than 800 state schools across Queensland and when fully implemented it is expected we will save approximately \$10 million per year in electricity costs.

Importantly, the rollout of the ACES Program is expected to support 320 jobs and 58,000 hours of apprentice work. This outstanding initiative is showing Queensland state school students and their communities the Palaszczuk government's strong commitment to a cleaner, greener energy future. It is also a major boost for our education system here in Queensland. Not only are we going to save millions of dollars; we are also helping to reduce our impact on our environment and supporting local jobs, particularly in the regions.