




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2019

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Watson Snr, Mr S; School Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.26 am): I add my condolences to the family and friends of Sam Watson. I worked with him for many years and what a strong advocate for his peoples he was.

On this final day of the parliamentary year it is a good time to not only look back at the previous 12 months but also to look forward at the 12 months ahead. Over the past year, we have invested more than \$1.5 billion to build, maintain and improve Queensland state schools, because we know that our state schools are great schools. By the time this House convenes again in 2020, the Palaszczuk government would have opened eight new schools—new secondary schools at Calliope, Coomera, Fortitude Valley, Mango Hill, Ripley Valley and Yarrabilba as well as a new primary school in Ripley and a new special school in Caboolture. They will all be ready for day 1 of term 1 next year. These new schools will not only cater for greater student numbers in rapidly growing parts of our state but also provide a great boost to our economy by supporting local jobs. Construction will also be well underway at five new schools ready for the first day of school in 2021, including the Inner City South State Secondary College, a secondary school at Baringa, primary schools in Pimpama and Palmview and a special school in Palmview as well.

By the time this House sits again, 61 high schools throughout the state—from Cairns to Cleveland and from Proserpine to Pimpama—would have benefited from the \$250 million 2020 Ready Program, which has created more than 700 jobs across Queensland. This construction program has built classroom blocks, science laboratories, design studios, dance studios, staffrooms and various other learning spaces just to name a few, all to accommodate the additional 17,000 students expected in secondary schools in 2020 as we move to six full cohorts.

By the time we are back in this place again, we would have also continued our \$235 million investment to renew our existing school infrastructure, delivered 30 new school halls under our \$200 million Advancing Queensland State Schools program, implemented our fast-tracked \$50 million priority air-conditioning program this financial year, and put more than 17,000 solar panels on school roofs.

We are undertaking the largest education building program Queensland has ever seen, which means better outcomes for students, better outcomes for teachers, teacher aides and staff and more jobs for Queensland, all delivered on time and on budget. Education is one of the Palaszczuk government's top priorities and we will always ensure that children get the best start in life through a world-class education.