




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 21 May 2020

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Advancing Clean Energy Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.07 am): The Palaszczuk government's \$97 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools Program—or ACES—is not only reducing energy costs at Queensland state schools through solar and energy efficiency measures but also helping to support valuable jobs in the renewables industry across the state during this COVID-19 pandemic. Through our recently announced Cooler Cleaner Schools Program we are providing a boost to our successful existing solar program with an additional \$71 million allocated to install even more solar PV systems—a total investment of around \$170 million.

These programs are installing a virtual solar farm atop Queensland's state schools and contributing enough solar generated electricity to power 25,000 homes. Our ACES program is being delivered over three phases, with phase 1 well underway and work on the initial 210 state schools nearing completion. It is amazing to see photographs of the rooftops of schools like in Tewantin, Hervey Bay and Moorooka, which are covered in PV solar panels and doing an excellent job generating electricity for the air conditioners that are being installed in those schools. Already almost 32,000 solar panels pumping out 11 megawatts of power have been installed, providing significant gains to the state schools that have received installations to date. As part of the government's commitment to unite and recover our state following the COVID-19 pandemic, the ACES program continues to support many local businesses and subcontractors in achieving the program's targets.

We are maintaining a consistent pipeline of work, in turn supporting the tradespeople who have been working in many of our communities across Queensland. Today I can announce that an additional 80 state schools originally set to benefit in future phases of the ACES program have been brought forward into phase 1 of the program. We are now leveraging our success and getting started early on some of the schools initially earmarked for future phases of the program. I can also announce the 580 schools that will be part of phases 2 and 3 of the ACES program which will be rolled out from 1 July this year. Schools in the Redlands, Brisbane south, Logan, the Gold Coast, Bundaberg, the Sunshine Coast, the outback, North Queensland, Moreton Bay and the Whitsundays will all benefit from additional energy-saving measures to be installed in the coming financial year.

This ongoing solar installation program is another real example of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to supporting jobs, local businesses and the economy as it continues to support industry during the uncertainty of COVID-19. In total across the life of this initiative, more than 550 jobs will be supported across Queensland, showing Queensland state school students and their communities this government's strong commitments to jobs and a cleaner, greener energy future.