



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2020

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Far North Queensland, School Infrastructure**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (9.57 am): Last week in Cairns it was my great pleasure to join you, Mr Speaker, and the member for Barron River, Minister Crawford, to see the great work being undertaken to improve many schools in Far North Queensland as part of our economic recovery plan in the regions. At the neighbouring Woree state and secondary schools, more than a million dollars is being spent to upgrade classrooms and training areas—while at the Smithfield State High School, more than \$20 million has been invested in a new performing arts and athlete development centre as well as a new STEM learning block. The \$12 million new multipurpose hall at Cairns State High School is progressing well and looks amazing. Importantly, these projects are supporting nearly 100 local jobs throughout construction.

This is just more firsthand evidence that the Palaszczuk government's record of investment in school infrastructure and education is unmatched. Since 2015, we have invested more than \$5.2 billion in school infrastructure, tripling our annual investment in school infrastructure between 2015 and 2020 from \$500 million to \$1.5 billion. In total, since 2015 we have built 2,067 new classrooms in Queensland schools, growing from 198 new classrooms in 2015 to 683 in 2019. Our record investment in school infrastructure has supported nearly 17,200 jobs across the five years of the Palaszczuk government. We know that by building and upgrading the schools of the future we are creating the jobs of today and providing a world-class education.

As our state implements recovery from the COVID-19 global health pandemic, our recovery plan continues our investment in school infrastructure supporting local jobs. When it comes to building the new schools, new classrooms and new facilities in schools, it is the Palaszczuk government that does it best. Since 2015 we have built and opened 13 new schools with another nine to be delivered in the next four years. Through the Renewing Our Schools program we are investing \$235 million to upgrade education infrastructure across the state, delivering 44 projects at 26 state schools including new and refurbished learning spaces, multipurpose halls and performing arts centres. This is on top of the \$200 million we invested through the Advancing Queensland Schools program to build 30 new school halls across the state, with all 30 projects now completed and being well used.

Our \$250 million 2020 Ready Program delivered additional classrooms at 61 state secondary schools to accommodate all students for the start of the 2020 school year. Of course, our signature \$477 million Cooler Cleaner Schools Program will air-condition every classroom, library and staffroom in every state school in Queensland and we will put 190,000 solar panels on school rooftops to help offset the cost. Our recovery plan will continue to invest in our schools, creating a better future for our children and supporting many important jobs across the state.