



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 1 December 2020

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Senior School Students**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.49 am): It goes without saying that for everyone across the world this has been a year like no other, but spare a thought for our year 12 students of 2020. This group was the first full cohort to do prep, the first group of year 7s to go to high school, the first cohort to study the new QCE system and the first recent year 12s to go through a global health pandemic. The new QCE system has been the biggest reform to Queensland's senior schooling in decades, but if anyone was going to deal with this change during a global health pandemic it was this group of incredible students.

Let's not forget that during term 2 these students learned from home for three weeks, all while preparing for the first ever external exams. Many of them missed out on familiar rites of passage such as formals, sporting competitions and schoolies, but as ever this group of nearly 50,000 senior students took it all in their stride. Of course we reacted quickly to ensure that no student would be disadvantaged by reducing the number of assessments required to be completed from four to three, and our great health response—led by the Premier—meant that end-of-year formals and graduations were able to go ahead.

I also want to pay tribute to the teachers who helped get them through this difficult year, particularly those who assisted with the marking of the new external exams. This was an entirely different process to years gone by. For example, tens of thousands of English essays needed to be double marked by nearly 400 teachers. That is more than 30 million words that needed to be examined over the course of a few weeks. I want to thank the Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority for their years of work in preparing for this change. The QCAA provided 670 face-to-face workshops as well as online professional learning opportunities to more than 21,500 teachers, and our investment in this was well received.

Mr Speaker, I could not be more proud of our seniors. While it may not have been the year they hoped for, I am sure it will be one they will never forget. Best wishes to all students in the next chapter of your lives. Whether that includes tertiary study, TAFE, a trade, work or training, we in this House wish you all the very best.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!