




Speech By
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ADJOURNMENT

Education, State System

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (6.18 pm): Our state education system is underfunded and overburdened, and the care and commitment of our teachers is the only thing holding it together. During estimates, I asked Education Queensland what its plans were to fully fund Queensland's state schools and how this would impact on the teacher shortage widely reported on by teachers, their union and the media. I was told there was no teacher shortage and no plan to fully fund state education.

Queensland's hardworking teachers tell another story. The Greens have been running a survey on public education and it is clear that state schools are buckling under the pressure of chronic underfunding. Nearly 250 teachers have responded to share their story. We asked them to name the biggest issues facing teachers in Queensland at the moment, and the overwhelming majority said workloads.

Full-time teachers spoke of working 50- and 60-hour weeks. One teacher said, 'I spend up to 15 hours working a day but I'm only paid for five.' Another said—

In the June/July "holidays" I had a 2-day break, the other 12 days I spent marking, reporting, and planning.

One said—

I have 60 tests in my backpack to mark this weekend.... now my weekend is gone!

When 58 per cent of teachers are working every single weekend without pay there is something wrong. When we included respondents who said they worked most weekends, the figure jumps to an astronomical 80 per cent. These are people who, like other public servants, actually had their wages frozen when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. I asked teachers if state schools are underfunded and 93.75 per cent said yes. However, Labor and the Liberals at the state and federal levels are determined to pretend there is not a problem. When I asked the state government about fully funding state education by increasing their share to 80 per cent, I was brushed off. I was told that the government is committed to just 69.26 per cent until 2023 and aspires to reach just 75 per cent by 2032. The government will literally give the coal industry a freeze on royalties rather than tax it properly to fully fund state education. The result is overworked teachers and worse outcomes for our kids.

Teachers and schools are the backbones of our community. Who does the government think will pick up the slack when it refuses to fund state schools properly? Of course it is teachers. Teachers are carrying our state education system. They are burning out and we need to fight to ensure the government taxes the big end of town to fund public education properly.