




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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ADJOURNMENT

Early Childhood Education; World Teachers' Day

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.12 pm): Every child in Queensland deserves the best possible start in life, including to grow up healthy, confident and resilient with equitable access to educational opportunity and associated developmental potential. Thanks to countless studies and empirical evidence, it is well known that the early years of a child's education are the absolute foundation for childhood development, including fundamental social, emotional and physical skills. In essence, early childhood education provides the building blocks for a child's future. Therefore, it is critically important that the provision of early childhood education is as robust and comprehensive as possible.

However, the Palaszczuk state Labor government is failing to listen to those on the front line and respond to the needs of early childhood education providers and ensure quality outcomes for our youngest Queenslanders. Nowhere is this more evident than with the Palaszczuk state Labor government's recently announced Kindy Uplift pilot program. As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for education, I have been inundated by stakeholders and early childhood education service providers who have been perplexed and shocked by the haphazard way that this program has been developed and announced by Labor. What is more, the lack of meaningful consultation and Labor's failure to be open and transparent with service providers on the pilot program is only further compounding the view that the Palaszczuk state Labor government is yet again favouring spin over substance. What Queenslanders do know is that this pilot program is being rolled out in 400 kindergartens and long-day-care services. Beyond that, the Palaszczuk state Labor government has been less than forthcoming with how such services have been selected, other than 'on characteristics predictive of educational need', as per the Department of Education's website.

Early childhood educators make a significant contribution to the education and lifelong learning of Queensland's children. Right now, early childhood educators are in high demand with a national shortage being predicted to take place by next year. To meet that demand, if a person is enrolled in an approved early childhood teaching qualification under current regulations that person can be employed while actively working towards the qualification. However, from 31 December this year that will no longer be the case in Queensland, meaning that those intending to become early childhood educators will have to complete their qualification prior to employment. This decision will result in Queensland being out of step with every other state and territory in the country. Other state jurisdictions are keeping the current regulation in effect until at least the end of December 2023. The Labor Minister for Education must take immediate responsibility and outline how the Queensland state Labor government intends to urgently address critical workforce shortages and what the state Labor government's long-term plan is for the early childhood sector in Queensland.

Finally, whilst I have had to outline the aforementioned issue, I join with the Minister for Education and all other members in the House in wishing all teachers and educators a happy World Teachers' Day, which is being celebrated tomorrow. I certainly know how all teachers and educators across the 11 schools in the electorate of Moggill work hard each and every day. I commend them for their professionalism and dedication.