




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 9 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cooler Cleaner Schools Program

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.53 am): The Palaszczuk government is investing in world-class educational facilities right across this state—and that includes air-conditioning every classroom, library and staffroom in every state school by June next year. I am pleased to advise the House that we are on track to achieve this historic milestone, a Queensland first. Our \$477 million Cooler Cleaner Schools Program will see all of our state schools air-conditioned and more solar panels installed under the existing Advancing Clean Energy Schools program.

Importantly, this investment has supported and will support a total of more than 1,500 jobs. Of the 649 schools audited, 533 schools now have had air-conditioning installed and are fully operational. This represents more than 7,000 cooler classrooms, libraries and staffrooms in Queensland state schools, with the remaining 116 schools in the process of design, installation or electrical upgrade. This is a great achievement just 12 months since the Premier and I announced the reset Cooler Cleaner Schools Program in February last year, a truly remarkable outcome.

The feedback has been very positive. For example, Silkstone State School in the Ipswich electorate now has 50 school spaces fully air-conditioned and operational, all finished last month. The P&C president, Darren Richards, said—

We've had very positive feedback about the air-conditioning rollout—from parents, students and teachers. It's been a big issue for us here in Ipswich because it's always that much hotter out here than Brisbane.

What a great outcome. The Palaszczuk government is committed to a clean energy future for Queensland to tackle climate change and, as part of this, has a target of 50 per cent renewables by 2030. Our \$168 million ACES program is designed to reduce energy costs across more than 800 state schools by installing solar and instituting other energy efficiency measures. The ACES program is delivering a reduction in energy costs across Queensland state schools and will contribute 61.4 megawatts towards our 2030 renewable energy target. This program is installing around 190,000 solar panels, creating a virtual solar farm atop our Queensland state schools and contributing enough renewable energy to power 25,000 homes. More than 450 state schools have more than 84,000 solar rooftop panels installed—over half the planned total, all to be completed by June next year.

The Palaszczuk Labor government is providing world-class facilities for our students and staff, generating business and employment opportunities, and tackling climate change to boot—a truly transformational, nation-leading Queensland program.