



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 March 2021

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Respectful Relationships Education**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.46 am): Events of recent weeks have prompted important and renewed community focus on matters of sexual assault, consent and reporting. Brittany Higgins has come forward bravely to tell her story of her experience as a young Liberal staffer at Parliament House, Canberra. We heard from child abuse survivor and Australian of the Year Grace Tame. Young people have been sharing their personal stories online on Chanel Contos's petition—stories of disturbing behaviour including sexual violence during and after their school years.

While I am sure we all agree that it is the responsibility of parents, carers and society more broadly to educate and support young people in addressing issues of sexual harassment, assault and consent, we also recognise that education and schools are part of the solution. We introduced compulsory Respectful Relationships education into state schools in response to the *Not now, not ever* report. In conjunction with the material delivered through the Australian curriculum, Respectful Relationships covers a broad range of topics and I am advised that consent is directly referred to in the year 11 topic of 'Building ethical relationships'.

However, the Premier and I agree that the time is right to examine the delivery of education on these matters in all Queensland schools. Accordingly, I have asked the director-general of my department to work across the non-government and state education sectors, P&Cs and school communities to explore whether consent and reporting are adequately covered in the Queensland Respectful Relationships education program and the Australian curriculum. I have also asked that the issue be added to the agenda of today's meeting of the Sexual Violence Prevention Roundtable, which includes a senior officer of my department. I will also be writing to members of my Ministerial Student Advisory Council to seek their views on Respectful Relationships education ahead of our next meeting in early May. As always, we urge victims of sexual violence to make a report to police and seek support or advice.

It is disappointing that during a week when we are celebrating the success of women around the world we have a member in this House who is essentially saying in a text that Meghan Markle is a gold-digger. Meghan Markle is not who she married. She is a strong successful woman in her own right. The young people of today deserve better from every member in this House.