




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 25 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Weather Event, School Closures; Renewing Our Schools Program

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.50 am): I can confirm that one government and three non-government schools are closed today due to access.

I join the Premier in congratulating Steve Wardill. I wish him all the very best. I have a fundraising idea for the media gallery staff at Parliament House: we can auction his seat. We know that his seat is much coveted and that the gallery staff would love an opportunity to occupy the seat Steve leaves vacant. I think we will raise quite a bit of money for the parliamentary staff. Seriously, all the best, Steve Wardill. I am sure you will be missed amongst all of us—in more ways than one. Congratulations!

Today I am pleased to report on a significant milestone in our \$235 million Renewing Our Schools program, which was a 2017 election commitment. This program included the substantial refurbishment of 17 of our oldest and most established high schools, with around 35 projects like Bundaberg State High School, Maryborough State High School, Proserpine State High School in Whitsunday, and Sarina State High School in Mirani. I can report that all projects in these 17 schools are forecast to be completed by the end of term 2. These schools now proudly display new and upgraded facilities to improve teaching and learning spaces. This is the most significant infrastructure investment some of these schools have seen in decades. The works have supported more than 680 local jobs across the state, helping to maintain a consistent pipeline of work for tradies, apprentices and local businesses.

Our investment has delivered and continues to build a wide range of much needed school infrastructure projects, including new multipurpose sports centres at Cairns State High School, Indooroopilly State High School in Maiwar and Smithfield State High School in Barron River; performing arts centres at Everton Park State High School, Proserpine State High School and Toowoomba State High School in Toowoomba North; an information technology hub at Mitchelton State High School in Ferny Grove; a campus communications upgrade at Maryborough State High School; and general school upgrades to resource centres, admin blocks and science labs.

In addition, nine schools have benefited from our investment under the Renewing Our Schools program. They include Murgon State High School in Nanango which will receive a much needed and long-wished-for hall from this program, on track to be completed midyear. I join the member for Nanango in acknowledging what a difference this hall will make to that community. Other schools to benefit include Woodford State School in Glass House where there has been a \$1 million upgrade to the STEM facilities; Toowoomba East State School in Toowoomba North, with new amenity facilities; and Lawnton State School in Kurwongbah, which is getting their much treasured new hall.

The Palaszczuk government has a proud record of investing in educational infrastructure right throughout Queensland. I look forward to continuing to deliver our pipeline of work with our \$258 million school halls program, our \$433 million classroom building blitz, our \$110 million for refurbishment and renewal projects, our \$180 million for non-government school infrastructure, and \$50 million for shovel-ready projects—all delivering world-class educational facilities throughout this great state.