




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Kindergarten

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.51 am): I join the minister and the Premier in acknowledging that no workers were injured at that Callide incident yesterday, which is very good news.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering our \$12 million election commitment to expand our remote kindergarten in schools initiative to 20 more schools. Our commitment will deliver remote kindies operating next year in 20 more schools—from Mount Garnet in the Far North to Thallon near the New South Wales border. This will involve additional infrastructure and staffing in regional and remote Queensland—all part of Queensland's economic recovery plan. That means more kindergarten-aged kids in rural and remote Queensland communities will be able to go to face-to-face kindy for the first time. We know the benefits that flow from kindergarten in giving our kids a great start. Kindy helps improve children's literacy and numeracy skills and social skills and prepares them for school. All the research shows the benefits that flow later in life in terms of improved school results and better health and employment prospects.

The Palaszczuk government started remote kindies in 2016 at 38 schools, and this year 69 rural and remote state schools are kindy-ready. More than 800 Queensland children have attended remote kindy statewide since it started, including nearly 170 currently registered. These kindies were established in schools where there was no other kindy service within a 50-kilometre radius and this has now been reduced to 40 kilometres. That means more kids can access quality kindy no matter where they live in Queensland. I know the Isolated Children's Parents' Association supports remote kindy for our rural and remote families, and I recently met with the ICPA president, Louise Martin.

Remote kindy is for kids like Harriet Abell at Tambo, four hours west of Roma. Harriet's mum, Carroll Abell, is a big supporter of remote kindy after seeing the difference the Tambo State School remote kindy has made to Harriet. She says kindy has helped Harriet become familiar with the school, the expectations of being in a learning environment and, most importantly, having to listen to someone other than her mum. The 20 new schools comprise five in Central Queensland, three in the Burnett region, nine in the Darling Downs and south-west, and three up north. This is what Labor governments do—invest in our future, invest in the services that support families and build communities, no matter where they are in the state.