




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

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MOTION

Schools, Free Meals

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (5.15 pm): I rise to support the amendment moved by the member for McConnel and to follow the member for Maiwar. It is always interesting to hear the Greens when they take a tiny little slice of the story and turn that into the whole story. They miss the fact that we have a massive infrastructure spend in our schools across the state. Anyway, that is what we get from them.

Supporting school breakfast programs and Foodbank is something the Palaszczuk government is already doing, as members have heard. I am more than happy to inform the member for South Brisbane about the work we are doing. Our government is committed to giving children a great start in life and ensuring that children are provided with a nutritious breakfast, which evidence shows helps them to concentrate and to learn.

In addition to the many school breakfast and lunch programs that Minister Grace has already outlined in detail—many—the total funding, on top of that, from the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy for Foodbank's school breakfast program alone and the school breakfast program expansion into regional and rural locations from 2018 to 2024 is \$2.4 million. Through the department of communities we fund Foodbank Queensland to deliver the school breakfast program, a program that currently, in amongst the many other programs, operates in 74 schools in the Greater Brisbane area as well as schools in inner and outer regional areas. In fact, school breakfast programs are so popular that in 2019-20 our government expanded the program to regional locations, with 51 schools commencing their school breakfast program in term 1 last year.

Last financial year more than 738,000 meals were provided by Foodbank for the school breakfast program. This was over 125,000 meals more than in the previous year. This is an outstanding achievement, especially considering that schools were closed for several weeks during the COVID-19 pandemic. We still saw a massive increase.

As a parent and a former teacher, I know how vital it is for children of all ages to start their day with a healthy breakfast. Earlier this year I saw firsthand the benefits of this program when I visited Ambrose State School near Gladstone and dropped into the breakfast program there. Teachers, support staff and parents at the school told me how the program had helped improve the concentration of their students which in turn had a huge benefit to their learning outcomes.

What we are seeing here today is another example of the Greens trying to make it sound like they have this great new idea when in actual fact the government is already doing it. As members heard from the Minister for Education and from me, this government is already investing significantly in food recovery and distribution to schoolchildren, individuals and families in need. We are proud of our partnership with Foodbank and other organisations, particularly those providing school breakfast programs. Quite frankly, we do not need the Greens to state the obvious about the support that we already provide to kids in schools.

We are seeing a bit of a theme from the Greens lately, trying to sound like they are coming up with all these new ideas that are not actually new. Recently the member for South Brisbane vigorously supported a position paper that her mentor, Councillor Jonathan Sri, published bemoaning the very obvious lack of cultural diversity in their own party. You only need to look at the Greens MPs here in Queensland to know that diversity is not even a remote consideration for them. For their information, we have noticed that there is no diversity. In fact, One Nation has more diversity than the Greens political party in Queensland, which is saying a lot. We on this side of the House absolutely embrace diversity. That is why we have three First Nations people on this side of the House.

Coming back to the topic at hand, I point out that this government strongly supports Foodbank. Beyond funding for school breakfast programs, my department is providing Foodbank with over \$960,000 this financial year for food recovery and distribution as well as access to premises. This government strongly supports school breakfast programs.

We have listed our financial support here today. I can tell members that there are numerous schools right across Queensland that are being supported through that program—schools such as Milpera State High School, Warwick Central State School, Calliope State School, Dysart State School, Mackay West State School, Mount Archer State School, Mount Isa Central State School. I could go on and on. We are supporting school breakfast clubs here in Queensland and we will continue to do so.

(Time expired)