



Speech By  
**Hon. Scott Stewart**


**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 April 2021

**MOTION**

**Schools, Free Meals**

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (5.41 pm): I support the amendment moved by the minister. A lot of people know my previous work history in this House, but we know the importance of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to organisations that support young Queenslanders in our schools. They work they do is incredibly important in helping and supporting students through free healthy breakfasts and lunch boxes, counselling, career advice and pathways. As a former principal and teacher, and as a dad too, I know the importance that a good breakfast makes to the start of the day. That is why the government is committed to providing children with breakfast through school breakfast programs along with an expansion of the School Breakfast Program. Through these programs we want to make sure that all Queensland children, regardless of their circumstances, have a great start to the day.

As we have heard before, breakfast has been proven to improve attention, memory, behaviour and attendance, which all leads to happier and healthier kids in our classrooms. The School Breakfast Program provides fresh, healthy breakfasts for thousands of kids each week who would have otherwise gone without. In Townsville there are already a number of breakfast programs running thanks to the support of this government. Just to name a few in Townsville, Aitkenvale State School, Cranbrook State School, Currajong State School, Garbutt State School, Heatley State School, Mundingburra State School and Rasmussen State School, plus others, are also part of this program. Across the state 727 state schools and campuses have indicated that they offer a breakfast program. Any school, in consultation with their community, can choose to operate a breakfast program to provide meals for families in need.

In 2020-21 the Department of Communities are providing Foodbank with \$260,000 for the School Breakfast Program, which supports it to run in 74 schools. In addition, the department provided funding of \$267,000 in 2020-21 directly to 51 school P&Cs or chaplaincies in rural and regional centres to deliver an expansion of the School Breakfast Program. In Townsville so many local businesses, which are the heart of our community, donate items to schools as well as many individuals who do not do it for the accolades but just because they want to. The member for Rockhampton, 'Bazzie the Beekeeper', does this with his honey. He gives his honey to schools for their breakfast clubs, which is an amazing thing to do. Sensational, Baz! Well done, mate.

To answer the member for Hinchinbrook's question 'Where does the money come from?' during the last election the Greens' plan for achieving their breakfast and lunch program, amongst other pie-in-the-sky ideas, was to increase the mining royalties in some cases by up to 500 per cent a year. Simultaneously they are anti coal and wanted to see all of the coalmines closed immediately, so they wanted to increase royalties while shutting the mines. I was a year 9 maths teacher for many years, and in my former career I can tell you that all of my students know what happens when you multiply anything by zero. It does not matter if the royalty rate is 500 per cent or 5,000 per cent; if there is no resource sector then multiplying anything by zero will give you—

**Government members:** Zero.

**Mr STEWART:** Absolutely. This is just Greens economics, or 'greenomics', at its best. This government supports all parts of our economy, including organisations that help our students. This government knows it is not just about supporting them through one program. We know that wraparound services are incredibly important. That is why this government supports a range of other organisations which are there to assist students in the present but also into the future. Some of these include the Clontarf Foundation for year 10 to 12 boys which is offered in four schools in Townsville: Heatley Secondary College, Thuringowa State High School, Kirwan State High School and my old school, Townsville State High School.

**Mrs Frecklington:** It is a wonderful program.

**Mr STEWART:** It is a great program. Thank you, I take that interjection. I would like to take the time to talk about our P&Cs and the sensational work they do. They help support our kids. They do so much great work in our schools, and I have seen firsthand the great work that can be achieved through collaboration between P&Cs, principals and governments. P&Cs are the voice of our school communities. As a former principal I can say that it is often a robust voice, but it is always a passionate one with the school's interests at heart. All of these points show that the Palaszczuk government's commitment to non-government organisations across Townsville and Queensland help support young Queenslanders in our schools each and every day.