




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Early Childhood Education

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.48 pm): The early childhood education sector in Queensland is struggling. There are staff shortages and there is certainly no clear way forward under the Palaszczuk state Labor government. This week I have asked the Minister for Education what specific targets have been set in relation to the employment of new early childhood educators in Queensland. There needs to be clarity on what specific programs are yet to be funded and will be delivered by the Labor government. This needs to happen to ensure there is a sufficient and skilled workforce to support early childhood education and ensure that the needs of our children are being met.

This year's state budget papers revealed that not a single educational outcome metric was achieved across reading, writing and numeracy through years 3, 5, 7 and 9. The early years of a child's education are certainly the foundation for development, providing the building blocks for the future. New South Wales and Victoria have increased their funding by over a billion dollars to work with the sector to improve staff qualifications, overall numbers and capacity. The Queensland state budget was a missed opportunity to implement key reforms and also deliver a skilled workforce.

The Labor state government needs to work in genuine consultation with the sector; these are serious issues. Until December last year, if you were enrolled in an approved early childhood teaching qualification, under regulation 242 you could be employed while actively working towards the relevant qualification. From 31 December 2021 this provision was cancelled in Queensland, meaning that you must have completed your qualification prior to employment.

Queensland will be out of step with nearly every other state and territory in the country. They are keeping regulation 242 in effect until the end of December 2023, allowing the sector to grow their much needed workforce. Early childhood services are experiencing staff shortages across the board—not only qualified early childhood teachers but also diploma and certificate III qualified staff.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge Queensland's dedicated teacher aides during this week's Australian Teacher Aide Appreciation Week. As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I wish to extend my sincere congratulations to the Tallebudgera State School teacher aide team in the electorate of Currumbin who were today awarded the Australian Teacher Aide Team of the Year award. I know that the member for Currumbin, Laura Gerber, offers her congratulations, as does former education minister and member for Surfers Paradise John-Paul Langbroek.

In conclusion, as the shadow minister for the arts I wish to acknowledge a number of important events. It was a pleasure to attend last night's celebration of Queensland's classic arts here in the Queensland parliament. I know that the Minister for the Arts was there as well. Commencing this weekend, the Brisbane Festival will once again showcase the very best of Queensland's artistic and cultural communities. I look forward to attending the official opening tomorrow night as well as Riverfire on Saturday. Many other events will be held in the next little while. There will also be some terrific displays. Locally in the electorate of Moggill, I am delighted to again be sponsoring the fantastic ArtBurst Arts and Creative Fair being held in Kenmore this weekend.