




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENT

Department of Education

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.26 pm): In relation to Queensland's education system, the Palaszczuk state Labor government is failing students, parents and teachers. The Department of Education's annual report for 2021-22, which has been tabled by Labor's Minister for Education, is an indictment of Labor's lack of clear direction and due diligence in our education system. Perhaps most damning in this report is the revelation on page 60 that—

During 2021-2022, 6 Human Rights complaints were assessed as upheld or substantiated ... and an action or decision found to be incompatible with human rights.

As the LNP's shadow minister for education, I have previously spoken in the Queensland parliament of the serious, shocking and deeply distressing allegations of such abuses that have occurred under this Labor government in our education system, including those which have been advised by the Human Rights Commission to be an act of torture. The Labor Minister for Education must provide a full explanation and public account of these serious human rights breaches. What actions and strategies are being put in place to assure Queensland's parents, teachers and staff that their human rights and those of their children and students are being protected?

The Department of Education's annual report also details a raft of educational performance measurements and targets that the Queensland state Labor government has failed to meet. In the early childhood sector the target for the proportion of enrolments of children who reside in disadvantaged areas was 95 per cent, yet only 80 per cent was achieved. When it comes to students achieving either at or above the national minimum standard, under the Palaszczuk state Labor government virtually all targets were missed. In fact, of the 24 measured targets across years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in areas such as literacy, writing and numeracy, only three targets were met. Most concerning, not a single target was met for years 7 and 9. The significant underachievement and disparity of outcomes when compared to Queensland's Indigenous students across these cohorts is a shocking indictment of Labor's failure to deliver.

The Liberal National Party has consistently called on the Palaszczuk state Labor government to deliver a comprehensive strategy that improves student educational outcomes. The Liberal National Party wants Queensland students to excel beyond their peers in other states, and Queensland's parents, students, teachers and staff deserve a Queensland state government that is solely focused on this mission. I note that the Department of Education has also undergone considerable senior executive and managerial restructuring. It is vitally important that there is no disruption from these changes and that these changes ultimately result in improved educational outcomes for all Queensland students.

I am also concerned in relation to page 77 of the annual report and this state Labor government's recorded failure in student engagement and retention. As evidenced by table 12, between 2017 and 2021 attendance rates have declined in every single educational region. What is more, this decline in attendance is even greater amongst Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander state school

students. The Labor Minister for Education must demonstrate a strong commitment to improving educational outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders which are in line with national Close the Gap targets. Queensland students, parents, teachers and all school staff deserve better.