




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Floods, Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.59 am): I would like to put on record my deepest sympathies to those impacted by the recent floods. I have lived in Brisbane my whole life and this rain event—this rain boom—was like nothing I have ever seen or heard before. Almost 800 millimetres fell in just six days in Brisbane—that is the highest ever recorded. For our schools it meant over 1,000 buildings affected; thousands of metres of carpet, wall and floor coverings damaged; and 15,000 rectification tasks needed, including cleaning debris, roof repairs, ceiling repairs, wall repairs, drainage, electrical safety checks, cleaning and decontamination. I visited a number of damaged schools and it was devastating to see.

But when disaster hits, the Palaszczuk government steps up quickly and gets on with the job. At one point we had over 600 state schools that were not able to open due to the flood event which included floodwater on site, power outages—it is a bit hard to open a school when there is no power—access issues, fallen trees and dangerous roads. In less than a week we got that number down to just six. This is a remarkable achievement.

My thanks go to school communities, principals and staff and my departments and also to QBuild, Energex, disaster emergency services and transport workers, to name a few, for their dedicated hard work. At the height of the clean-up we had 350 QBuild staff and contractors on school sites doing a remarkable job. Everyone came together and worked incredibly hard and got our impacted schools open again quickly. For those six schools still unable to fully open, I personally visited each one—and others—to discuss flood mitigation infrastructure planning.

As industrial relations minister, we had the Electrical Safety Office and others providing advice and support to make sure that when the clean-up started it was happening safely. As racing minister, I announced \$500,000 in flood relief funding to provide some financial relief to trainers affected by increased costs for transport, food, forage and bedding for their animals due to abandoned race meetings.

We have had floods and we have had COVID but we are still delivering Queensland's plan for economic and post-disaster recovery. That is because the Palaszczuk government gets on with the job of delivering for Queenslanders no matter where they live.