




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 29 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Education and Workers

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.55 am): The Palaszczuk government's priority will always be to invest in Queensland's schools, support students and staff, and ensure all workers have safe, secure jobs. A world-class education and the opportunity for secure, well-paid employment are things we want for every single Queenslanders. In tonight's budget Queensland deserves its fair share. I hope we see the investment and support Queensland schools and workers need and deserve from the Morrison government such as flood mitigation and infrastructure support, a strong commitment to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, funding to back up the respectful relationships curriculum, an investment in the mental health and wellbeing of our students, and improving wages and entitlements for low-paid workers.

We have seen some significant damage in the recent flood event. We want to rebuild and flood mitigate our schools. We welcome the money the Morrison government has committed to the independent and Catholic sectors for flood recovery. I would also welcome a commitment of additional funds in the budget to support our betterment and flood mitigation plan for affected Queensland state schools now.

We know that delivering a quality education is a key component to closing the gap and achieving equality for our First Nations students. That is why the Palaszczuk government continues to invest, to lift the educational outcomes for our more than 63,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In the budget we would like to see a commitment for ongoing partnerships with organisations like the Clontarf Foundation and Stars Foundation. We know First Nations languages are vital, and I welcome the federal opposition's announcement this morning to commit \$14 million to bring First Nations teachers and languages into schools. I call on the Morrison government to match this commitment in their budget today.

More broadly, our \$100 million Student Wellbeing Package is bringing GPs, psychologists and wellbeing professionals to students in their schools. I hope to see the Morrison government match the federal opposition's commitments of extra funding for schools to support student mental health and wellbeing as part of its \$440 million school bounce-back plan and \$77 million to support the delivery of the respectful relationships curriculum in our schools. Queensland students deserve no less.

As I said, it will always be a priority of this Palaszczuk Labor government to support Queensland's workers. We have led the nation on labour hire, wage theft, paid domestic and family violence leave, and industrial manslaughter. It is sad that after 10 years the Morrison government has delivered nothing for workers in these areas. Tonight's budget is an opportunity to address the low wages and entitlements of workers—namely, in industries like aged care and child care, with much needed additional funding. All stakeholders in this industry report concerns regarding attraction and retention of qualified workers and only federal additional funding will assist in addressing these real concerns.

We will always stand up for schools, students and workers. Let's see if the Morrison government will finally step up and do the same and deliver Queensland its fair share.