




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNELL

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Budget, Education

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.25 am): Yesterday in this House I said the Palaszczuk government's priority will always be to invest in Queensland schools and students, and ensure workers have safe, secure jobs. I called for funding in the areas of flood mitigation, Indigenous students, respectful relationships, student health and wellbeing, and improving wages and entitlements for low-paid workers. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the LNP's federal budget has fallen way short of what is needed, and has failed to deliver Queensland our fair share.

This LNP federal budget was an opportunity for the Morrison government to lay out a vision on the eve of an election for the future of our students' education and wellbeing, and to support workers and their families. I do not think they rose to the occasion. They scored what every student in the gallery does not want to see: a big fat 'F'.

The budget appears to be nothing more than a reannouncement of short-term programs that were largely already funded and other measures that do not even scratch the surface of what is needed for schools, students, workers and their families. The Morrison government has committed less than \$10 million for the whole of Australia to help teachers and school leaders to better understand and respond to the mental health and wellbeing needs of students. This pales in comparison to the federal opposition's \$440 million school bounce back plan and the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million mental health and wellbeing plan just for Queensland. Compare \$10 million for the whole of Australia and the Palaszczuk government's \$100 million just for Queensland. There is a big difference!

This is just not good enough. Our students deserve better. I welcome the \$17 million towards respectful relationship education. Compared to the \$77 million committed by the federal opposition, I know which policy gets the gold star. There is nothing to get our flood mitigated schools back on their feet or to build back better.

The budget could have also been an opportunity to really address the issue of low wages in industries such as aged care and child care, where we know there are huge problems in attracting and retaining staff. Instead, the budget does nothing to improve the wages and entitlements of these workers and address the systemic and serious concerns in these sectors. They squibbed their responsibility. The LNP's federal budget failed to deliver Queensland our fair share of funding.

The Palaszczuk government will always stand up for Queensland schools, students and workers. What a shame the Morrison government did not do the same. They appear more interested in buying votes than giving Queensland its fair share.