



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 March 2022

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **State Schools, Internet**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.53 am): I have a real deal here. As the Premier said, we have entered into a \$190 million partnership with Telstra that will be game changing for our state schools with additional flow-on benefits to the communities and businesses around them. It will enable teachers and students right across Queensland to have access to the latest tools and technologies needed to deliver a truly 21st century education. My department has worked on the tender process for nearly 12 months to get the best deal for schools and students. I welcome to the gallery representatives from Telstra joining us today, Gaven Nicholls and Jason Mills. Thank you very much for your efforts.

This investment from the Palaszczuk government will dramatically increase internet speeds at all 1,258 Queensland state schools. We do not forget the National Party. When I say 'dramatic', I am not exaggerating. The work is starting already. Upgrades will roll out from the start of next term and hundreds of schools will see the benefit this year. Speeds will be 40 times faster at all schools by the end of 2023 and up to 200 times faster in 2026. Our remote, isolated schools and students will not be left behind. Newer technologies like next-generation satellites will be used to deliver faster internet where terrestrial options are less practical. This is an absolutely incredible announcement for our schools and students and for the delivery of education throughout Queensland.

Classrooms will have access to the very latest technology and students will have no limits placed on their learning. This partnership will see Telstra invest \$110 million to upgrade hundreds of exchanges across our great state. Around 350 upgrades have been identified already, and more will be added as work progresses. This will mean access to better, faster internet in those areas for schools and students as well as access for businesses and communities around them. What a real deal that is! 'Compare that to the NBN' is what I want to say.

From Aurukun to Agnes Water, Currumbin to Cooktown and Yarrabah to Yeppoon, hundreds of communities will reap those flow-on benefits. For example, there will be new capabilities for regional and remote health care that have previously been out of reach due to bandwidth limitations, including telehealth and the provision of real-time diagnostics. We have futureproofed this partnership, too. As new technologies emerge that can provide an even better service, we can incorporate these into the contract.

This announcement is a game changer for the delivery of 21st century education for schools and students with great additional benefits to the community at large. The Palaszczuk government continues to deliver for the National Party and regional and remote communities, because our schools and students, even in National Party seats, deserve nothing less.