




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cooler Cleaner Schools Program

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.47 am): Just over two years ago, the Premier and I announced an exciting and ambitious plan to air-condition every state school classroom, staffroom and library by June 2022.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: Thank you. You are welcome, all of you.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, I can clearly see you are trying to conduct the orchestra. That is my job, not yours.

Ms GRACE: It is so lovely to be thanked for a job well done! I am delighted to advise that school air conditioning under our \$477 million Cooler Cleaner Schools Program is complete—and more than two months ahead of schedule. This is an outstanding achievement. I would be upset if I were them, too, because it is six years ahead of their inferior plan—six years ahead! Shame on you. All I need from you is ‘thank you’.

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Ms GRACE: We know students learn best when they are in cooler and comfortable learning environments, with schools in the hottest parts of Queensland already air conditioned. I again acknowledge the good work by P&Cs and school communities that installed air conditioning in some—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members, order!

Ms GRACE: They cannot contain their excitement, Mr Speaker. It is extraordinary. If I had all of my classrooms air conditioned, I would be excited too! The P&Cs never have to put their hands in their pockets for air conditioning again. Our program has finished the job and brought air conditioning to another 650 schools, with more than 10,000 school spaces having air conditioning installed—

Dr Rowan: Are they all working?

Ms GRACE:—and all working, yes!

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Ms GRACE: So 650 schools and 10,000 spaces. Importantly, our program also includes funding for the ongoing maintenance and replacement of existing legacy air-conditioning units, with more than 35,000 school spaces in 1,258 schools being upgraded. Just think about it: every single day we are

updating and upgrading units throughout Queensland. Let me say that again: with 35,000 learning spaces and 1,258 schools, every day we are upgrading and replacing units. I accept the photo from the Leader of the Opposition—a photo of a legacy unit requiring updating obviously following—

Dr Rowan: They're not the only ones!

Ms GRACE: Honestly and truly, you should be ashamed of yourself over there—

Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair, Minister.

Ms GRACE:—using such cheap political pointscore. The program sourced local contractors and tradies, with around 1,000 jobs supported during the height of the pandemic and part of our economic recovery plan. Schools from Talwood in the Southern Downs to Tamborine Mountain in the Scenic Rim are all now air conditioned through our program. On the Darling Downs 85 schools have seen over 700 spaces air conditioned, in Wide Bay-Burnett almost 100 schools and 830 spaces have been air conditioned, on the Sunshine Coast almost 50 schools and 1,170 spaces have been air conditioned and in the Brisbane area alone 323 schools and around 5,660 spaces have been air conditioned, and those opposite are still complaining! This is making a huge difference to school principals, who agree. Nerang State High School principal Scott Ison from Gaven said—

This is the most significant change in our school in the past decade.

Toowoomba State High School principal Ashley Roediger from Toowoomba North said—

Toowoomba summers are extremely hot and our winters are very cold so it's fantastic to now have temperature-controlled teaching spaces.

An honourable member: Hear, hear!

Ms GRACE: Thank you, member. We continue to install solar panels on state school rooftops, and this program is on time and on budget. We are committed to providing quality facilities to schools in all corners of the state. When the Palaszczuk government commits, the Palaszczuk government delivers. You're welcome!