



Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Labor Government, Education

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.58 am): I join the Attorney-General in acknowledging the Miller family in the gallery. I also acknowledge the great work of the previous attorney-general, the current Attorney-General and Dr Lynham. I particularly acknowledge ChaplainWatch, which does a fantastic job—along with the police force and others—in relation to the safe night precinct in Fortitude Valley.

I spoke yesterday of the opportunities for workers with the election of an Albanese federal Labor government when it comes to rights and entitlements, particularly stagnating wages. There is great news for Queensland schools, too. Federal Labor has a suite of education and early childhood policies that complement what we are doing in Queensland already, especially in terms of student wellbeing and supporting teachers.

The Albanese Labor government has committed \$200 million for extra mental health support as part of its \$446 million COVID bounce-back plan. This complements our own \$100 million Student Wellbeing Package. As part of this package we have 80 new wellbeing professionals, mainly psychologists, now employed in Queensland schools from Thuringowa State High School to Currumbin Valley State School and there are more to come—up to 464 across the state.

On support for teachers, federal Labor will invest nearly \$100 million to boost teacher numbers and improve student outcomes. Becoming a teacher in Queensland is one of the most rewarding things you can do, as the member for Bundaberg knows, and as do others, such as the member for Mansfield, and all the other teachers who are in the parliament. Sorry if I am not mentioning you all. There is also Minister Stewart. They all are educators and very proud of it. There is Minister Enoch as well. My goodness, now I have started a run. Of course, there is the member for Mackay. My goodness, I am stopping there, Speaker, or else I will get into trouble. It is a rewarding job. We need our brightest and best in teaching so our younger generations can reach their full potential.

I am delighted to advise the House that today we will be announcing the recipients of nearly \$500,000 in scholarships and grants to attract and support aspiring teachers. More than 70 pre-service and beginning teachers will receive generalist graduate and STEM teacher scholarships and be appointed permanently to a regional, rural or remote state school. Recipients of our Pearl Duncan scholarships and grants will get up to \$20,000 each. They are named after Dr Pearl Duncan, an Aboriginal teacher who has dedicated her life to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in education—a worthy cause indeed.

The TJ Ryan Memorial Medal and Scholarships program is for year 12 school leavers who graduated last year in 2021, with up to \$10,000 to support them in their journey to becoming a teacher. Under our Aspiring Teacher Grant program, high achieving students commencing an initial teacher education program will receive up to \$5,000. In total, nearly 200 students and beginning teachers are being supported by the Palaszczuk Labor government this year alone. This is what Labor governments do, whether at state or now federal level: back our students, back our teachers, every educator step of the way.