




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 21 June 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Schools, Share the Dignity

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): On this side of the House we are all looking forward to our Treasurer handing down a budget this afternoon that will deliver for all of Queensland. It is going to deliver good jobs and better services and will protect and enhance our great Queensland lifestyle.

It was great to join the Premier and Treasurer at the opening of the Brisbane South State Secondary College for an early announcement of the expansion of our partnership with Share the Dignity which will be confirmed in today's budget. The Palaszczuk government believes that access to period products and misplaced stigma around periods should never be a barrier to learning. That is why we were delighted to announce that all state schools in Queensland will be given the opportunity to receive a Share the Dignity vending machine, which provides free period products to students, thanks to our \$13.3 million investment in the budget.

This announcement builds on the highly successful existing partnership with Queensland based charity Share the Dignity, first announced in 2020. I have visited some of the schools that already have machines installed, including Mackay State High School and Pioneer State High School, with the member for Mackay and Assistant Minister for Health. At Pioneer State High School, captain Alyssa and vice-captain Alarna told us the machines were amazing and will make a huge difference—and they were not the only ones. Founder and Managing Director of Share the Dignity, Rochelle Courtenay, said she was elated that this partnership will now be extended to all state schools. School communities responded by saying it was a 'fantastic initiative', 'wonderful news', and mothers reflected on how much better things will be for their daughters compared to their own experiences.

I am also delighted to confirm my department will cover the ongoing costs of maintenance and restocking the machines so that no student goes without. The partnership also means schools in Queensland—both state and non-state—will continue to have free access to Share the Dignity's Period Talk program, which is delivered by students to students and is all about reducing any misplaced shame and stigma. Schools will be contacted in the coming weeks about the process of getting a machine installed. I can tell the House that they look fantastic. It is not an expression of interest this time: any state school that wants one, will get one. It is just another way the Palaszczuk government is delivering much welcomed better services to Queensland state school students and communities, no matter where they live.