




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Education Infrastructure

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.50 am): The Palaszczuk government is proud of the education infrastructure we are delivering right across this great state. This year alone we are investing around \$2 billion to maintain, renew and build new schools and facilities, supporting 4,200 jobs. It is part of the Palaszczuk government's plan to create good jobs, deliver better services and enhance our great Queensland lifestyle. These projects range from brand new schools in our fastest growing communities to major specialist classrooms and to paint makeovers for our smaller schools. These buildings would mean nothing to our students without our exceptional teachers and school staff. They truly are the foundation of the world-class education system we have here in Queensland, setting up our kids for a great future.

At the last election we made a commitment to employ 6,190 new teachers and 1,139 new teacher aides over the next four years. We are definitely on track to meet that commitment in spite of national and worldwide teacher shortages. Our innovative \$20 million Turn to Teaching initiative will employ and support 300 aspiring teachers to complete a teaching qualification and undertake paid internship employment with a guaranteed permanent position in a great Queensland state school thereafter. We are continuing to invest in our teachers. Our current enterprise bargaining offer for Queensland state schoolteachers includes some of the highest pay increases and best working conditions for teachers in the country including regional and remote incentives. This is all about making the Department of Education the employer of choice for teachers in Australia.

We know there are workforce challenges in attracting and retaining our teachers in the classroom. These are not unique to Queensland; they require a national response. That is why I was delighted to attend the education ministers' round table and meeting in Canberra last Friday. I want to especially thank Rebecca West, the new deputy principal at the new state school in Yarrabilba, and Dale Morrow, the principal at St Rita's College, for joining us and sharing with us their stories. The three areas I wanted to focus on were attraction, retention and advancement, and I am pleased to report that is exactly what we did.

Ministers met with teachers, school leaders, unions and other education experts at Parliament House to address how we attract teachers in the first place, how we give them the best initial teacher education and training, and how we support them once they enter the classroom. Everything was on the table: workload, career paths and progression, mentoring and professional development. What a breath of fresh air it was. From this discussion ministers agreed to develop a national teacher workforce action plan that will be presented at the December meeting.

There is no better investment in our future than investment in education. I look forward to keeping the House informed of progress on these critical matters because every student in Queensland deserves it.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, it was not the only thing that happened on Friday. Happy birthday for last Friday.