




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Schools, Energy and Jobs Plan

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.21 am): The Palaszczuk government's commitment to a clean energy future for Queensland is full steam ahead. I am proud to be part of a government with a visionary plan to set Queensland up for the future. We are proud that our state schools are already playing their part in reaching the targets laid out in our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan—70 per cent renewable energy by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035. Through our \$168 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools program, ACES, a record number of Queensland schools have had solar panels installed to help slash electricity costs and cut carbon emissions.

We have 200,000 panels on more than 900 schools; that is, more panels on more roofs than we initially set out to achieve. This equates to a \$26 million saving on energy bills every single year. We have virtually created a solar farm on our Queensland state schools with enough renewable energy to power 25,000 homes. That is bigger than many country towns. The panels are right across Queensland: 18,400 panels in the Far North; 17,000 on the Gold Coast; 15,000 in the Darling Downs; 10,000 on the Sunshine Coast; 8,400 in Townsville; 7,500 in Mackay; 4,300 in Bundaberg and the list goes on.

The ACES program also supported about 1,000 good jobs—many of those jobs the Treasurer just spoke about—and kept Queenslanders working through the height of the pandemic. The completion of ACES is a significant achievement and follows the completion of the Palaszczuk government's Cooler Cleaner Schools Program in April where we announced that every single classroom, staff room and library in Queensland state schools are air-conditioned—two months ahead of schedule and six years ahead of the LNP's plan I might add. They said we could never do it. When it comes to solar panels, Queensland is leading the way.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Are we done?

Ms GRACE: I love it when they are so enthusiastic about every school being air-conditioned in this state, the only state or territory in Australia to do it—amazing. Just say thank you and you are welcome every single one of you. When it comes to solar panels, Queensland is leading the way.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms GRACE: I will take that interjection: we were so embarrassed that we delivered it six years ahead of schedule compared to the plan of those opposite. That is so embarrassing. I like to be embarrassed like that every single day.

Ms Palaszczuk: That's right: as the minister he closed a school in his own electorate!

Ms GRACE: That's right. How embarrassing that I had to save a school in his own electorate which he wanted to close that I kept open for the member for Everton.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr Mander interjected.

Ms GRACE: I will take the interjections from the member for Everton Park.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, through the chair.

Ms GRACE: I will keep taking the interjections from the member for Everton Park. What a great school that Everton Park State High is. We have invested millions of dollars; those opposite were closing it. There was a 'for sale' sign up on the school. That is really embarrassing if we think about it.

Our state has the highest rate of household rooftop solar installations in Australia with one in three homes using solar. That is more than 700,000 homes and small businesses across the state using solar to generate clean energy—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: They are still going. I will take more of their interjections if they like.

Mr SPEAKER: Please do not encourage them, Minister.

Ms GRACE: I definitely will encourage them. We have some good news on this side. I am happy to say it every single second. With the Palaszczuk government's game-changing \$62 billion Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, the future is bright for Queensland.