




Speech By
Hon. Meaghan Scanlon

MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Federal Election, Youth

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (10.50 am): Queenslanders are 10 days away from the biggest federal election of our time and one thing is clear: young people will not back down from being heard. As youth affairs minister I was happy to see that three million Australians aged between 18 and 29 have enrolled to vote at this election and that includes 644,000 young Queenslanders. They make up 26 per cent of voters in the division of Brisbane, 25 per cent of voters in Griffith and 22 per cent in Herbert and Ryan. The Electoral Commission confirmed that the majority of people who enrolled to vote when the election was announced were young people.

However, unfortunately, under the Scott Morrison government young people have been denied the opportunity to be a part of forming policies and making decisions that impact their futures and their lives. The Abbott government abolished the office of youth introduced by a previous Labor government and there has been no framework for direct engagement between Australians and the federal government. In my position I have been fortunate to meet with young people from across our state, from the Far North to the south-east and from Central to North-West Queensland. Time and time again I have heard the same themes: they want action on housing affordability, cost of living, jobs and wages, the environment and climate change. That sentiment is being felt across Australia.

Even prior to the pandemic, under this federal government young Australians were at risk of being the first generation in the history of our nation to be worse off than those who came before them. With devastating bushfires, a global pandemic and unprecedented floods, younger people now face a future with increased cost-of-living pressures and a rent and housing affordability crisis thanks to the Morrison government. We cannot leave a whole generation behind. However, in the Morrison government's most recent budget we saw young people being treated the same as they have been treated for over a decade: ignored, forgotten and denied the opportunity to succeed. If the wave of young Australians enrolling is anything to go by, they are sick of being ignored. To the 644,000 young Queenslanders who will vote in this election I say: show Scott Morrison that you want a government focused on the issues that matter to you, not one that is focused on the next photo-op, the headline in tomorrow's paper or the next slick marketing campaign.