




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

School Opinion Survey; Anti-Semitism

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.19 pm): The Palaszczuk state Labor government has comprehensively failed to deliver a world-class education system for Queensland's students, parents, teachers and staff. The latest School Opinion Survey results prove this point. On page 3 of the 2023 School Opinion Survey state report, across 49 key metrics not a single measurement recorded any improvement from those of 2022. The attempts by the Labor Minister for Education to claim victory on school attendance is just smoke and mirrors. Whilst there have been marginal improvements from 2022-23, when the data is reviewed in its full context and compared to 2019—that is, before the COVID-19 pandemic—it is evident that there is still a long way to go. This includes secondary school attendance rates, which are over four percentage points below the 2019 peak of 88.5 per cent, as well as overall Queensland school attendance rates, which are still more than three percentage points off the 2019 rate. Perhaps most revealingly and deeply concerning are the results in relation to management of school behaviour.

I now wish to address recent events that have deeply affected Queenslanders, all Australians and, indeed, communities worldwide. On 7 October 2023, a heinous terrorist attack occurred in Israel, resulting in the loss of 1,200 lives, injuries to over 7,700 individuals and the taking of more than 200 hostages. This marks the largest attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust. The circumstances surrounding this incident and the Middle East are complex, and it is crucial to approach them with a commitment to accurate information and objective understanding.

The events since 7 October 2023 have given rise to incidences of anti-Semitism globally, including right here in Australia and in our state of Queensland. It is a disgrace to witness incidents of racial intolerance and hatred, such as calls for violence against Jews in Sydney, confrontations in Melbourne and the defacement of Jewish businesses. These actions run counter to core Australian values including inclusiveness, religious tolerance, the safety of all citizens and adherence to the rule of law.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I have been disturbed to hear of incidents that have been reported in Queensland schools, with Jewish students facing targeted harassment. We cannot ignore the rise in anti-Semitic actions such as the use of inflammatory slogans at rallies and the inappropriate indoctrination of children. In one incident, a Jewish teenager was confronted by individuals who identified themselves as 'Neo-Nazis' or ' Hamas freedom fighters', and in Cairns a Jewish child was told, 'Hitler was right' and 'free Palestine'.

Our commitment to combating anti-Semitism must be unwavering. We cannot allow hate to flourish in our schools, universities and workplaces or any part of society. It is imperative that we learn from history and recognise the signs of people spreading hatred and intolerance. I call upon each and every member of the Queensland parliament to stand united against anti-Semitism. Let us foster an environment of understanding, respect and dialogue. Our shared commitment to Australian values demands nothing less.