




Speech By
Dale Last

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

Record of Proceedings, 30 March 2023

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Burdekin Electorate, Teachers

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.25 pm): We know that as of July last year the Department of Education had almost 900 vacancies to fill and even today, just like in other areas throughout the state, teachers throughout the Burdekin electorate are going above and beyond to minimise the effect of those vacancies on our children. Members will remember how the last time I stood in this place and raised an issue regarding air conditioning at Dysart State High School I was ridiculed. I was targeted by the minister for making up stories about an air conditioner issue in my electorate. Those vacancies continue and I will continue to stand up for my schools in the electorate because I pay particular interest—

Ms Grace: The best schools in the nation!

Mr LAST: They are the best schools, I agree with the minister, and I will always stick up for the schools and the teachers in my electorate. Whilst there are vacancies I will continue to advocate for those vacancies to be filled because it has a massive impact on those communities, as the minister well knows. I often like to say that the reason families go to these areas is for health and education. If we do not have those two right then we will not attract families to those particular areas. The big blue shed—the minister knows it—at Moranbah State High School is still closed today while we are waiting for a teacher to take up an appointment at that particular locality.

The main issue I want to talk about today is the substandard accommodation that exists throughout the Isaac area and the impact that is having on attracting and retaining teachers into those particular areas. We have graduates going out there, taking one look at this accommodation and turning around and hightailing it out of the Isaac region because of the substandard accommodation. Rents in Moranbah are \$600 to \$900 a week. Why would you want to go there and be forced to live in substandard accommodation? Why would you want to go there and be forced to share a house with people you do not necessarily get along with? Why would you want to go to Dysart and be forced to live in a mining camp? You know what I am saying is true, Minister. They need accommodation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Through the chair, please.

Mr LAST: The minister knows that if you are going to attract and retain teachers in these areas they need suitable accommodation. What currently exists in those areas does not meet even the most basic standards. I will continue to stand up in this place and advocate for all those teachers who deserve better. We know it is a tough environment. They deserve to go out there and have decent accommodation. The minister should step up to the plate and provide it.