



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2023

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Path to Treaty**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.51 am): Last week I was proud to be present as the Premier outlined the Palaszczuk government's plan for the Path to Treaty. It was an incredibly moving speech, as was the entire event. The steps outlined by the Premier last week and again in parliament this morning provide the foundation for a true and lasting reconciliation that properly accounts for what has happened in the past and charts a positive way forward for the future. I am proud to be part of a Labor government going down this path and I am looking forward to the Path to Treaty ministerial consultative committee next month. I want to see education play a key role.

Outcomes for First Nations students are embedded across every priority within our new Equity and Excellence Strategy, including our priority focus on educational achievement, especially in English and maths, wellbeing and engagement and culture and inclusion. On the last point, culture and inclusion, last week I had the pleasure of meeting with co-chairs of the Path to Treaty independent interim body, Sallyanne Atkinson and Cheryl Buchanan. Cheryl made the point that language is so critical to culture and identity and that is why I want to see and drive a real focus on the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages in our schools as part of equity and excellence.

We currently have around 40 schools that are implementing an Indigenous language program aligned to the Australian Curriculum but, more importantly, I want to see more. We are supporting around 150 schools working with local language owners to co-design a First Nation languages program. We are also working extremely hard to support and increase the number of First Nation teachers in our classrooms. Initiatives like the Pearl Duncan scholarship, the Remote Area Teacher Education Program and Centres for Learning and Wellbeing that provide ongoing professional development and mentoring are all making a real difference. We are working hard to support our First Nation teacher aides and community teachers who are so often the lifeblood of their schools. For those who want to, we are working closely with JCU on pathways to make the transition to teaching. Education has always been a powerful force in changing people's lives for the better. As we embark together with First Nation peoples on the Path to Treaty, it has never been more important.