




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 22 August 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

GPs in Schools

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk government is proud of our commitment to support the health and wellbeing of our students, which is fundamental to delivering a world-class education. That is why we took a bold nation-leading student wellbeing plan to the election and it is why we are getting on with delivering our \$106 million investment.

Members will recall the original plan was to place GPs in 20 schools but, given the level of interest, we expanded the pilot. I am delighted to advise the House that all 50 GPs are now operational in our schools. Just last week I was able to visit the GP service at Western Cape College in Weipa, which the students and staff absolutely love. In fact, I was advised that the service at Western Cape College holds the record for the most number of appointments in a day.

We are also committed to employing up to an additional 464 health and wellbeing professionals during this term to give every student access to a professional in school. I can advise the House that, as at 31 July this year, the department has employed 427 wellbeing professionals, including 157 psychologists, 99 guidance officers, 165 social workers and six youth workers. That is a great result in a tight labour market. That is in addition to over 1,000 guidance officers and specialist advisers already in our schools.

As the package rolls out, we are getting some encouraging feedback on how it is working from students, school staff and the health professionals themselves. A student at Harristown State High School in Toowoomba South said—

The GP has supported me by listening and understanding. I like that I am able to get the help, guidance and support I need in an easy stress-free way.

The principal at Deception Bay State High School in Bancroft said that the GP was providing a wonderful service for so many students, some of whom would have struggled to access medical support.

Last week federal minister Jason Clare joined me at Kelvin Grove State College in my electorate to talk about the Commonwealth government's School Wellbeing Boost, which will provide \$36 million to nearly 1,800 Queensland schools—that is, all schools in Queensland. This includes: \$50,000 for Kelvin Grove, which they will put to good use with \$10,000 to Grow Your Mind, an Australian designed wellbeing program; and \$40,000 to add an additional space to their excellent student wellbeing centre. While there, we met psychologist Sarah and adorable therapy dog Banjo, who are doing a fantastic job supporting the students. Queensland is leading the nation on this front, providing comprehensive health and wellbeing support to all of our students, no matter where they live.