



Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**


**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 September 2023

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Kindergarten**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (2.15 pm): I tell you what, Leader of the Opposition: to give up five minutes for that is a description of the opposition in this state. They honestly and truly gave up five minutes to talk about what they could be doing in this state, instead—

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** It was not even funny; I will take that interjection—using five minutes to quote songs. I really think those on the opposition backbench should be worried. If that is the best you can do then I say to you, ‘You have nothing at all and are desperate to scare’, and I use the words of the Leader of the Opposition. On this side of the House we will not let you get away with twisting the truth and propagating misinformation out there in the community.

When it comes to free kindy, it has not even started and already they are talking about a crisis. That is absolutely ridiculous and untrue. We want those 8,000 children not currently enrolled to enrol in kindy. It does not help to send out information when it has not even commenced. We started kindy for all this year. We have been working on this program with stakeholders for the last couple of years. We have worked with them on workforce challenges. We have worked with stakeholders who were all there when the budget announcement was made, and not one of them expressed concerns about being able to accommodate kindy for all or free kindy in 2024. What do we hear from them? Cheap political pointscoreing due to a slogan that has been invented, and every one of them over there parrot it every single time.

Let me tell you what the stakeholders have said. These are the facts, not the rubbish and nonsense being pedalled by those opposite. Early Learning and Care Council of Australia CEO Elizabeth Deeth commends the significant work our government is doing to build and retain a quality and valued early learning workforce. C&K CEO Sandra Cheeseman—

**An opposition member:** Guarantee it.

**Ms GRACE:** I will guarantee it. CEO Sandra Cheeseman said—

At C&K we are ready and excited for free kindy. We know there are staffing issues in some areas, but we are confident the work we are doing in partnership with the department and the broader sector will address these issues.

I was asked whether I will guarantee that free kindy will happen in 2024. I want to ask those opposite whether they can guarantee that they are going to fund it. I get an inkling here of maybe a few cuts happening with free kindy and using the teacher as an excuse in relation to doing it—making up an issue when there is not an issue there. Listen to the stakeholders. The president of the Australian Childcare Alliance, Majella Fitzsimmons, said that they are ready and they know how important this is for families and children, yet those opposite mislead, misinform and twist the truth. They are the facts. We will not allow those opposite to scaremonger those families who deserve to have free kindy.

We have also assisted with the numbers in early child care. We have provided additional kindy programs in 65 long day care centres and we are looking forward. I fear that this program may be cut by those opposite. This is the start of the cuts. They have a track record. It is only a Palaszczuk Labor government that will ensure that free kindy remains in this state. What do we see from those opposite? We see absolutely nothing. They have the audacity—they have got more front than Myer—to come in here and say that all the programs and all the issues that we have are their ideas. I suppose free kindy was their idea too. They say that everything was their idea, yet there is nothing coming from them policywise. They are a vacuum and they are not fit to govern.