




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

State Education Week; World Teachers' Day; Farm Safety Calendar

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.59 am): This week is State Education Week so I want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our dedicated staff—from cleaners to teachers, teacher aides to principals, admin staff to groundskeepers, P&Cs to tuckshop volunteers and everyone in between—who make our state system so fantastic. Tomorrow Australia will be celebrating World Teachers' Day, so I have provided badges to all members so that we can proudly recognise the pivotal role teachers play in our children's lives and in the future of our state.

There is nothing more pivotal than teaching literacy and numeracy. They are the basic building blocks for giving our kids a great start and a world-class education. Being able to read is a fundamental life skill that provides a foundation for all future learning, no matter the subject, not to mention the pure enjoyment that reading can give children as it takes them into alternative worlds and realities. As a parent, what a joy it is to see your child learn to read and develop a love for words.

This week I was delighted to be at West End State School in South Brisbane to launch the new Queensland Reading Commitment. This is a \$35 million investment over three years, in addition to the \$23 million a year we already invest to support schools with literacy and numeracy. The Reading Commitment will provide a system-wide consistent evidence-based approach to the effective teaching of reading across all Queensland state schools so that every student can realise their reading potential.

Key elements of the commitment include: explicit phonics instruction for students in line with the new version of the Australian curriculum, including a mandatory year 1 phonics check; building the expertise of teachers and teacher aides with professional development through our new Education Futures Institute; increased engagement with families, supporting them to read at home with their children; ongoing advice about reading difficulties and disorders through our reading centre; and a comprehensive suite of reading materials, including guidelines, resources and advice.

The commitment has been welcomed by unions, principal associations, P&Cs Queensland and the Australian Education Research Organisation. There will be a staged approach to implementation, with an initial intensive focus on prep, year 1 and year 2. Schools will be inviting families to learn more about the commitment and what it means for their children. We have developed this commitment and approach by consulting with experts and looking at the latest research. We co-designed the resources with 13 schools including West End State School, trialled them in 50 more and we continue to work with unions, principal associations, teachers and staff on the implementation of the exciting commitment.

Alongside the World Teachers' Day badges, I have also provided members with a copy of the long-awaited 2024 Farm Safety Calendar. This year more than 1,400 children showcased their knowledge about health and safety on rural properties and, of course, their artistic flair. I do not know how the judges pick just 12. It is a fun project but it is a serious message. Only three per cent of Queenslanders work on farms but nearly 30 per cent of work related deaths happen on them.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms GRACE: They are excited about their calendars, Mr Speaker. As Safe Work Month comes to a close let us all remember: work safe, home safe.