



Speech By  
**Hon. Leeanne Enoch**


**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 November 2023

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Schoolies Week**

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (10.41 am): Tomorrow, year 12s from right across the state will have their final day of school. Many will be ready to celebrate their hard work and enjoy a well-deserved break with friends at schoolies week. For many decades the Gold Coast has been the destination of choice for many school leavers including, I can imagine, many in this chamber.

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms ENOCH:** Gosh, all the stories! This year we are expecting up to 20,000 school leavers to arrive on the Gold Coast from Saturday to begin a fun-filled week. Equally, Airlie Beach—another popular place for schoolies week celebrations—is expected to attract 1,600 year 12 school leavers. During schoolies week, the safety of young people and the local community remains the Palaszczuk government's highest priority, which is why we have committed \$2 million through the Safer Schoolies initiative in the 2023-24 budget to this important statewide initiative. Introduced in 2003, the Safer Schoolies initiative provides important identification, diversionary activities and vital safety and support services on the ground at the Gold Coast and at Airlie Beach.

The Safer Schoolies team has also been visiting schools throughout the year delivering educational resources and safety sessions to year 12s on topics such as drugs and alcohol, mental health and wellbeing as well as sexual consent. To date, a total of 58 schoolies themed education sessions have been delivered to over 8,000 year 12 school leavers. These sessions are in addition to the education sessions also delivered by Red Frogs and the Queensland Police Service. The Safer Schoolies response is delivered by nine Queensland government agencies in partnership with the City of Gold Coast and community partners including Rosies, Drug ARM, Gold Coast Youth Service, Red Frogs and Lives Lived Well.

The success of Safer Schoolies also relies on the more than 1,000 volunteers who give up their time to help, including dedicated volunteer Rita. Rita, who is 91, has been volunteering with the Safer Schoolies response for a number of years and will be working in her usual spot in the kitchen making sure all of our hardworking volunteers and workers are fed well. Volunteers just like Rita will be performing a wide range of roles including assigning wristbands, doing street patrols and helping teens find their way around. For some school leavers it will be the first time they have been away from home by themselves, so to have volunteers around is a huge support and, importantly, helps reassure parents like the member for Stafford. There will also be an increased police presence, a health and wellbeing space, chill-out and recharge zones and free nightly entertainment in the schoolies beach hub so school leavers can celebrate with their peers in a safe alcohol- and drug-free zone.

Our message to year 12 school leavers for schoolies week is: be safe and watch your mates. Ask volunteers to walk you home or for support. They are there to help. Look out for one another, stick together, talk to each other, seek help when you need it and respect each other's individuality. Everyone wants year 12 school leavers to have a great time this schoolies week and to come home with wonderful memories of their end-of-year celebrations.