




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Education System

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.45 pm): After six years it is time for the Labor government to recalibrate, having so comprehensively failed to learn any lessons from a series of its own scandals and failings involving our Queensland state education system. Having promised to air condition every classroom, library and staffroom in Queensland state schools, late last year Queensland students and staff discovered that air-conditioning units were being installed seemingly for decorative purposes only as they were not able to be turned on due to network capacity issues.

Today in a ministerial statement I heard the Labor Minister for Education say that 533 of 649 schools have been air-conditioned. What she failed to mention was the myriad problems with units being installed that could not be turned on and network issues. There are 116 schools still to be air-conditioned and that needs to be done in the next few months. Given the myriad problems up to this point, it will be interesting to see whether those schools will be done. And this is before we get to Labor waste.

Last weekend the Queensland Academy for Science Mathematics and Technology threw valuable educational resources into skip bins and there was a backflip by the government in relation to that. Today we learned that over four days \$8,000 of taxpayers' money was spent on taxi vouchers that had to be provided to teachers at the Brisbane South State Secondary College because the car park was not ready. This goes to the heart of the government in relation to waste and not being able to deliver projects on time and on budget.

We know that in December of last year Queensland students were let down when 24,000 year 12 students incorrectly received an email advising them that they would not be ATAR eligible. That created heartache for those students and their families.

Mrs Frecklington: Distress.

Dr ROWAN: It created distress; I take the interjection from the member for Nanango.

The Palaszczuk state Labor government has also failed to submit its homework when it comes to ensuring the safety of Queensland's dedicated and hardworking teachers. From 2015 to 2019, attacks on state school teachers skyrocketed. The number of suspensions for attacks with objects increased by 29 per cent to almost 2,000 incidents whilst the number of attacks on teachers without objects jumped by 50 per cent to more than 3,300 reported incidents. There must be zero tolerance with respect to violence, bullying and intimidation in our schools and the Labor government must do a lot better and a lot more. They must develop a comprehensive and sustainable strategy to deal with this issue. Certainly from my meetings with the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Teachers Professional Association of Queensland I know that they are calling upon the state Labor government to do more to eliminate that from our schools in Queensland. The Liberal National Party opposition will always stand ready to assist in regards to this important workplace safety issue.

The Labor government would also have to receive a fail grade when it comes to its lack of support for Queensland's 250 independent public schools. The future of the Queensland independent public schools program continues to remain uncertain despite the well documented success of our independent public schools and the student outcomes that they are achieving. Those matters and the resolution of other significant public policy education issues can assist with the delivery of a world-class public education system here in Queensland.

We all know that education underpins our future, our success and the prosperity of Queensland for many generations to come. It is a system which every Queensland student, parent and teacher deserves and one which forms the foundation of a knowledge-based economy. With an annual budget of more than \$14 billion for the Department of Education, Queenslanders deserve better from the Palaszczuk state Labor government, especially after a raft of accountability, integrity and departmental cultural issues which were highlighted during the estimates process in December last year. That is before we get to botched public consultation which is taking place with respect to the new Brisbane inner west primary school. I continue to be contacted by residents across the western suburbs of Brisbane with their concerns about this government's botched public consultation processes, traffic congestion with respect to proposed localities, loss of green space and a loss of suburb ambience. The government needs to do a lot better when it comes to that as well as high school infrastructure planning and investing in our high schools, whether that be Kenmore State High School or a new high school for Karana Downs and Mount Crosby, and investing across the western suburbs of Brisbane. A well-resourced, visionary, functional and free public education system is critical for our future prosperity and economic success, and all Queenslanders deserve nothing less.