

Queensland Parliament Hansard Green


DATE: 03/06/2026

FILE: 03062026_002680_ADJOURNMENT DEBATE_GREEN CHAMBER.DOCX

SUBJECT: Back to School Boost

MEMBER: Mr KING

Back to School Boost

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (9.12 pm): I rise tonight to talk about the Back to School Boost and Behaviour Boost initiatives and how they are working—or not working as the case seems to be in some of my local schools. I know that I talk a lot about schools in this place. That is because the life-changing power of a good education is something I am very passionate about. When something is not working for our schools the way it should be, I will always speak up. It is clear to me that kids across the Kurwongbah electorate are getting back to school.

In his media release dated 6 May, the Minister for Education announced ‘almost 50 per cent of the popular Back to School Boost now utilised by Queensland’s primary school parents’. Let us unpack that statement. Almost 50 per cent? Not even half of primary school parents have been able to use the LNP’s Back to School Boost four months into the school year. I can tell members why.

In my electorate of Kurwongbah we have surveyed hundreds of local mums and dads about whether the boost has helped them this year. Here is some of the feedback we received. Families told us how disappointed they were that the boost was not actually available before school started—despite the initiative’s name and despite being promised at the state election that it would help them with back-to-school expenses, most of which are incurred, funnily enough, at back-to-school time, not halfway through term 2. We heard from families that \$100 is not enough to ease back-to-school cost pressures when book packs and uniforms, and some camps and excursions, cost much more than that amount. Some parents told us that they will not even be able to access the full \$100 for their students this year because there are not enough eligible school invoiced Boost expenses to spend it on. These parents still have plenty of other school expenses—like replacing lost hats, buying school jumpers, topping up stationery or ordering tuckshop on Fridays—that the money the LNP promised to them cannot be used for.

I have also heard from P&Cs about how they have had to turn away families who had expectations of using their \$100 credit in the P&C-run uniform shops but could not because those items are not school invoiced. Therefore, I am calling on the minister to please take this feedback on board. Let’s work together to ensure families benefit from the Back to School Boost next year or, at the very least, sort out the misleading terms.

In a cost-of-living crisis, when the LNP has axed relief on electricity bills and car rego and they do not appear to support Labor’s push for cheaper fuel prices, the least they could do is follow through on their back-to-school election promise to Queensland families. Under the Crisafulli LNP government, I see household budgets being dragged backwards, expectations of truth and transparency in government being dragged backwards and the performance and conduct in our state parliament certainly being dragged backwards. They are all being dragged backwards by this LNP government that is paralysed by its own failures.

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