

~~teacher. This bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to implement this recommendation by setting up the legislative framework for testing those who apply for registration. This includes giving the Queensland College of Teachers the function of developing and administering the testing program.~~

~~The bill specifies that if a person is prescribed under a regulation as being required to take a test for literacy, numeracy or science the person will have to take the test and achieve a result that the college considers satisfactory in order to be eligible for registration as a teacher. The testing requirements will only relate to new applicants for Queensland teacher registration from late 2011, following commencement of this legislation and subsequent amendments to the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2005. Anyone who is already registered as a teacher in Queensland will not have to take the test when they apply to renew their registration.~~

~~The bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act to recognise the experience of kindergarten teachers. This government has committed itself to provide a kindergarten program for all children in the year prior to prep as part of the Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland initiative. Queensland has also entered into a bilateral agreement with the Australian government which provides that this commitment is to be met through the delivery of the kindergarten program by a four-year qualified early childhood teacher or a registered teacher with an early childhood qualification. To complement this, the bill ensures that a person's teaching experience in delivering a quality kindergarten program that is based on a Queensland Studies Authority approved or accredited kindergarten guideline is recognised for the purposes of teacher registration.~~

~~The bill also recognises the experience of teachers in other non-school type settings where they are delivering curriculum that is based on a syllabus that has been approved or accredited by the Queensland Studies Authority. This will include those who are teaching at TAFE senior colleges. These persons are required to be registered teachers, but until now their teaching experience has not been recognised when it comes to recency of practice requirements for renewing their registration, as distinct from obtaining their first registration. The bill addresses this unintended gap in the legislation.~~

~~The bill also recognises the teaching experiences of those dedicated people who take on educational leadership roles but who are not necessarily directly involved in delivering educational programs to students in the classroom. These people include educational advisers who provide classroom teachers with curriculum leadership, guidance and support, and facilitate their professional development. I commend the bill to the House.~~

~~Debate, on motion of Mr Seeney, adjourned.~~

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

First Reading

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (2.54 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Agricultural College Act 2005 and the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 for particular purposes. I present the explanatory notes, and I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Tabled paper: Agricultural College and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Tabled paper: Agricultural College and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, explanatory notes.

Second Reading

Hon. TS MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland) (2.54 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of this bill is to amend the Agricultural College Act 2005, principally to broaden the range of matters a skilled board may advise on in relation to the Australian Agricultural College Corporation—AACC—and to enhance corporate governance provisions relating to the board. The amendments to this act concern the operations of the AACC, a corporation sole established in 2005 following the consolidation of the four established agricultural colleges into one college in 2005.

AACC is tasked with delivering high-quality agricultural and rural vocational education and training for Queensland's agricultural industry. This vision is consistent with the Fresh Approach initiative I launched in June 2008 to invest in people, systems and services to build a more client-centric

platform to meet the future needs of the primary industries sector. Since 1967, the AACC has equipped young people with the necessary rural management skills to ensure a strong workforce for the continued growth of Queensland's valuable primary industries.

Over the past few years, a number of critical issues have emerged which have impacted the operational viability of AACC, including declining student numbers and reduced profitability due to drought and competition from the resources boom affecting agriculture as an appealing career choice. In addition, AACC's business model has not optimised AACC's capacity to meet new training needs in response to industry demands. This culminated in my decision to undertake a review of options for the improvement of the AACC business model in late 2008.

During this review, PricewaterhouseCoopers was commissioned to undertake a study to recommend governance models appropriate for AACC. PricewaterhouseCoopers recommended bolstering the role of the board to allow it to advise on a wide range of matters relating to the AACC and that, as a consequence of the enhanced role of the board, members be appropriately skilled and remunerated. In addition to the PricewaterhouseCoopers study, extensive consultation with industry peak bodies, AACC staff and communities where AACC has a physical presence has been undertaken.

I conducted six Dialogue for Action forums across Queensland in 2009 with over 140 participants from local and state government, agribusiness producers, peak industry bodies, training and education providers, AACC staff and the local community. While the focus of these forums was the draft AACC strategic plan, it was acknowledged by forum participants that the new AACC board would require an independent voice, a wide mandate in terms of issues the board will address and, most importantly, a board that is supported by and engaged with the local community and industry.

The act currently allows the board to consider the delivery of training to students and the needs of communities and rural industries serviced by AACC and nothing else. The bill proposes to widen the range of matters the board can advise the corporation on to include issues relating to AACC's strategic direction, operational, administrative and financial policies and other issues affecting AACC more generally. Feedback during the Dialogues for Action indicated that industry felt disenfranchised from AACC and had limited or no connection to AACC or the board. A key task of the AACC board is to gather industry input. By broadening the matters the board may consider and advise AACC on, the more involvement industry can have—via the board—with the training programs and overall function of AACC.

The bill proposes to emphasise the need for appropriate skills to be represented on the board and that board members may be entitled to remuneration. While the amalgamation of the agricultural colleges into one overarching framework was an important first step in the development and future success of AACC, I believe these amendments lay the foundation for further input from industry into the functioning of AACC as well as improving industry feedback into the development of training delivery systems and programs.

025 The changes represent important gains for the agricultural and rural industries as we continue to build AACC as a centre of training excellence that will produce highly skilled and work-ready graduates for the present and future workforce. A more industry-involved AACC will also benefit rural communities by providing better training outcomes, and will contribute to the Queensland government's Q2 vision by delivering world-class education and training and continuing to power a strong, diverse Queensland economy.

The opportunity is also being taken via this bill to amend the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1936 to assist the two Queensland veterinary schools in gaining and retaining the national and international accreditation necessary to allow their graduating students to gain registration to practice in Australia and overseas. One of the requirements for accreditation is that schools must meet a required student-teacher ratio level. This necessitates the employment of specialist veterinary staff. All veterinary schools in Australia are in competition to acquire scarce specialist staff in order to meet their accreditation requirements and to facilitate the registration of graduates. The James Cook University is in the process of finalising accreditation for its veterinary degree course by mid-2010 while the existing accreditation of the University of Queensland's course is to be reviewed later in the year. Both schools are in need of additional specialist staff to satisfy accreditation requirements.

The act does not currently allow recognition of European board certified specialists although the accreditation standards are the equivalent of those imposed on Australian veterinary schools. This disadvantages the Queensland schools in that European specialists are permitted to practice within the veterinary schools of other states. The bill proposes to amend an existing special category of registration to allow for wider recruitment of overseas-trained veterinary surgeons and specialists for employment in Queensland veterinary schools. This approach has been canvassed with the veterinary school heads who agree that the initiative would enhance their efforts in meeting accreditation requirements. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hopper, adjourned.