

Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025

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**Joint Submission of the
Queensland Teachers' Union of Employees and
Independent Education Union of Australia –
Queensland and Northern Territory Branch to the
Education, Arts and Communities Committee
Inquiry into the
*Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill
2025***

4 April 2025



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 ***About the QTU***

1. Established in 1889, the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) has chalked up 130 years of achievement as the professional, industrial, and legal voice of Queensland's public education and training sectors throughout regional, remote, and metropolitan Queensland. In 2025, the QTU represents nearly 50,000 members of the teaching profession who are employed in special schools, primary schools, secondary schools, other specialist school settings, and TAFE.
2. The QTU's advocacy represents the collective voice of Queensland's state school teachers and TAFE educators, and it is heard through our democratic structures. The supreme decision-making body of the QTU is our State Council, which is comprised of more than 120 democratically elected representatives from every branch throughout the state. Policy positions that have been adopted by QTU State Council underpin this submission.
3. This submission to the Education, Arts and Communities Committee Inquiry into the *Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025*, (the Bill) is made in the interests of our members, as well as the hundreds of thousands of students whom our members teach every year. This submission builds on the QTU's comprehensive understanding of 21st Century risks to the safety and wellbeing of students, teachers, and school leaders.
4. The QTU is affiliated with the Independent Education Union Australia Queensland/Northern Territory (IEUA-QNT) through our membership of the Queensland Council of Unions, the peak body for Queensland's trade unions.
5. The QTU stands in solidarity with the IEUA-QNT and its representations to the review of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (the EGPA), which are made in the interests of teachers, school leaders, and education assistants who are employed in Catholic and independent school sectors.

1.2 ***About the IEUA-QNT***

6. The IEUA-QNT represents ~16,000 teachers, support staff and ancillary staff in non-government education institutions in Queensland and the Northern Territory. It consistently engages in debates concerning industrial, educational and social issues through its Industrial, Education and Equity Committees and through its national counterpart, the Independent Education Union of Australia, which receives input from teachers in all states and territories.
7. As a union of education professionals in the non-government sector, IEUA-QNT's interest in the application of the EGPA primarily concerns those sections with direct application in non-government schools and areas where application in government schools sets precedents that might be extended to non-government schools, non-government school students, and non-government school communities.

8. IEUA-QNT is associated with the QTU through our membership of the Queensland Council of Unions, which is the peak body for Queensland's trade unions.
9. The IEUA-QNT stands in solidarity with the QTU and its representations to the review of the EGPA, which are made in the interests of teachers and school leaders who are employed in government schools. The IEUA-QNT supports the submissions of the QTU on the provisions of the EGPA which relate to state education.

1.3 Teacher unions and the EGPA

10. The QTU and IEUA-QNT are registered trade unions.
11. The QTU and IEUA-QNT have a proud history of working in solidarity and advocating in the interests of Queensland's teaching profession.
12. The QTU and IEUA-QNT have been actively engaged in processes that have informed the Bill. This submission remains consistent with the positions of the two teacher unions throughout Department of Education (the department) and Queensland Government processes to review and amend the act.
13. QTU and IEUA-QNT have consistently called for the department to provide a workload impact statement and a separate budget impact statement for any and all of the proposed amendments to the EGPA, and for both statements to be publicly available.
14. In 2021, the QTU and IEUA-QNT commenced stakeholder engagement with the department's review of the EGPA. In 2022, they filed a 15,000 word submission containing more than 50 recommendations, and subsequently filed an additional submission containing 3,500 words and an additional ten recommendations.
15. In 2024, in the interests of government schools and their teaching workforce, the QTU filed an 8,500 word submission with recommendations to the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee inquiry into the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislative Amendment Bill 2024*. The QTU President, Cresta Richardson, subsequently appeared with state school leaders at an Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee public hearing on 4 April 2024 to provide further information regarding its submissions and recommendations.
16. In 2024, in the interests of non-government schools and their teaching workforce, the IEUA-QNT filed a 1,500-word submission with recommendations to the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee inquiry into the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislative Amendment Bill 2024*.
17. Elsewhere, the QTU has called on the Queensland Government to:
 - amend section 7 of the Act, to recognise the social purpose of schooling, that is to support young people become socially responsible and to strengthen local and national cohesiveness, democracy, cultural richness, and diversity
 - amend the definition of a public officer under section 340 of the *Criminal Code Act 1899* to specifically include principals, teachers, and other frontline staff working in schools and TAFE colleges,

- deliver on its election commitment to ensure zero tolerance for violence in schools,
- adopt legislative measures that will ensure the physical and psychological safety of teachers, school leaders and students is prioritised, and that appropriate funding and resourcing are provided so that all employees and students are safe,
- ensure the Department of Education provides adequate training and resources to regional directors, school supervisors, and safety advisors to eliminate or mitigate the risk of occupational violence,
- launch a public awareness campaign about criminal offences and consequences related to violence against school staff.

18. The QTU and IEUA-QNT recognise that the recommendations listed in 17 are outside the scope of the committee's current inquiry, but the Unions reaffirm the importance of the Queensland Government taking steps to urgently address occupation violence in all Queensland schools.

1.4 *Organisation of this submission*

19. Following the introduction, this submission addresses seven parts of the Bill, namely:

- Transfer notes and sharing information
- Home schooling
- Online services
- School disciplinary absences
- Special school enrolments and transfer notes
- State delivered kindergarten
- Parents and Citizens.

20. The QTU and the government school teacher workforce have an interest in all seven parts. The IEUA-QNT and non-government school teacher workforce interests are primarily in parts 1-2.

1.5 Summary of recommendations

Proposed amendment	Position of Queensland Teacher Unions'	Comment
Budget impact statement	Recommended	The QTU and IEUA-QNT call on the Department and the Queensland Government to ensure that a specific budget impact statement and a separate workload impact statement are provided in any transitional arrangements arising from amendments to the EGPA, and that both statements are publicly available.
Workload impact statement	Recommended	
Amend section 7 of the Act, to recognise the social purpose of schooling, that is to support young people become socially responsible and to strengthen local and national cohesiveness, democracy, cultural richness, and diversity.	Recommended	
Amend the definition of a public officer under section 340 of the <i>Criminal Code Act 1899</i> to specifically include principals, teachers, and other frontline staff	Recommended	See <i>Queensland Teachers' Union Submission to the Youth Justice Expert Legal Panel on Adult Crime, Adult Time</i> (March, 2025) https://documents.parliament.qld.gov.au/com/YJRSC-6004/YJRSC-54D8/submissions/00000055.pdf

working in schools and TAFE colleges.		
Queensland Government to deliver on its election commitment to ensure zero tolerance for violence in schools.	Recommended	
Adopt legislative measures that will ensure the physical and psychological safety of teachers, school leaders and students is prioritised, and that appropriate funding and resourcing are provided so that all employees and students are safe.	Recommended	
Ensure the Department of Education provides adequate training and resources to regional directors, school supervisors, and safety advisors to eliminate or mitigate the risk of occupational violence.	Recommended	
Launch a public awareness campaign about criminal offences and consequences related to	Recommended	

violence against school staff.		
Transfer notes and sharing information		
Clause 8	Recommended	The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments on transfer notes and sharing information, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• amendment of s180 (Notice to principal of non-state school)• replacement of s251AB (Notice to non-state school's principal)• amendment of ch 14, hdg (Transfer notes)• replacement of ch 14, pts 1 and 2• amendment of s426 (Confidentiality)• amendment of s419F (Registration in programs)• amendment of s426 (Confidentiality)• amendment of s426 (Confidentiality)• amendment of s426 (Confidentiality)• insertion of new ch 20, pt 11, div 3• amendment of sch 4 (Dictionary)
Clause 11	Recommended	
Clauses 33-34	Recommended	
Clause 36	Recommended	
Clause 38	Recommended	
Clause 39	Recommended	
Online services		
		The QTU and IEUA-QNT do not support sharing of personal data without clear limits on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the type of data to be shared• where and how data will be stored• the length of time that data may be stored

Clause 37	In-principle support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the purpose for retrieving data third parties and personnel who can access the data. <p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT provide in-principle support for proposed amendments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insertion of new s426A
Home schooling		
Clause 9-10	In-principle support	<p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT provide in-principle support for proposed amendments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> replacement of s206 (Who is eligible for provisional registration or registration) amendment of s229A (Provisional registration or registration ends on 31 December in year child turns 17 years)
Clause 15	In-principle support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> insertion of new ch 20, pt 11 insertion of new ch 20, pt 11
School disciplinary absences		
Clauses 12-14	Recommended	<p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments on school disciplinary absences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> amendment of s283 (Duration and notice of suspension) replacement of ch 12, pt 3, div 2, sdiv 3, hdg (Chief executive's powers) insertion of new s289A
Special school enrolments and transfer notes		
Clauses 32	Recommended	<p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments on special school enrolments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> amendment of s156 (Enrolment)

Clause 38	Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insertion of new ch 20, pt 11, div 3
State delivered kindergarten		
Clause 35	Not supported	<p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT provide in-principle support for proposed amendments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amendment of s419F (Registration in programs)
Clause 38	Recommended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • insertion of new ch 20, pt 11, div 3
Parents and citizens		
Clauses 5-7	In-principle support	<p>The QTU and IEUA-QNT provide in-principle support for proposed amendments, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • amendment of s127 (Urgent matters) • amendment of s132 (Use of money received by association) • insertion of new s142A
Clauses 16-24	Not supported	
Clauses 25-31	In-principle support	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• amendment of s122 (Dissolution of an association)• amendment of s126 (Restriction on who may be a member of executive committee)• amendment of s130 (Subcommittees)• amendment of s139 (Regulation may provide for membership)• insertion of new ch 7, pt 11
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2.0 Transfer notes and sharing information

21. Since the Department's 2022 process to review the EGPA, Queensland's two Teacher Unions have consistently recognised the work of the Australian Government and Education Ministers regarding transfer notes and the synergies of that work with the 2022 consultation papers. This body of work has informed the proposed amendments in the Bill.
22. In 2024, the QTU submitted to the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee that the Union concurs with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Royal Commission), which acknowledged the need to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place for transfer of sensitive information. The QTU acknowledged the prescribed list contained in s25 of the *Education (General Provisions) Regulations* (the Regulations) and maintains that an amendment to this provision would (i) include specific guidance for a principal preparing a transfer note, and (ii) address the student's safety and wellbeing needs.
23. The QTU and IEUA-QNT maintain that the government and non-government sectors should continue to be consulted to determine a consistent approach to transfer notes that accord with the recommendations of the Royal Commission. The management of the administrative process of transfer notes should be determined by representatives from the three school sectors.
24. In 2024, the IEUA-QNT submitted that the amendments proposed in the *Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislative Amendment Bill 2024* satisfied the new requirements for provision of transfer notes when students shift between schools/sectors, represented a health and safety enhancement, and will support school leaders' capacity to balance the needs of students, staff, and the broader school community.
25. The QTU and IEUA-QNT maintain that the 90-day window for the principal of the new school to request a transfer note (s388B of the Bill) is potentially problematic if schools are dealing with students with complex and challenging behaviours. The Unions note that 90 calendar days is longer than a school term, and while we are clearly sensitive to the workload implications of a shorter timeframe for requesting the transfer note, the need for schools, and school staff, to be aware of potential health and safety risks is acute.
26. The QTU and IEUA-QNT suggest that the process for requesting a transfer note could, with investment of funding and resources, be automated, to enable school leadership to have more immediate access to information required to manage health and safety risks. We note that progression of national initiatives related to the Unique Student Identifier (USI) for school students would be of assistance with automation of transfer note processes.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments on transfer notes and sharing information.

3.0 Online services

27. The QTU and IEUA-QNT broadly support the proposed legislative safeguards contained in clause 37, namely 426A(2).
28. However, the in-principle support contained in this submission is subordinate to significant concerns that have been previously identified by the Unions, with regard to potential for harm to students, teachers, principals, school communities, and the teaching profession.
29. The QTU and IEUA-QNT urge the Department and Queensland Government to ensure that an approved online service has absolute limits on:
- the type of data to be shared
 - where and how data will be stored
 - the length of time that data may be stored
 - the purpose for retrieving data
 - personnel who can access the data.
30. Civil penalties should be applied to providers of approved online services that harm students, teachers, principals, school communities, or the teaching profession.
31. Moreover, the QTU and IEUA-QNT add that limits must safeguard personal data to ensure quality information sharing, not sheer quantity of information. The Unions believe that supporting teachers and principals to access quality information is more useful in supporting the needs of a student.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments regarding approved online services.

4.0 Home schooling

32. The QTU and IEUA-QNT recognise that the growth in numbers of students who disengage from school-based learning, and the subsequent increase in numbers of students who are home-schooled, necessitates greater regulation of home-schooling. Regulation of the teaching profession is a critical factor in ensuring that students have access to safe learning environments and quality learning and assessment experiences. We contend that inexperienced personnel cannot deliver

learning experiences of comparable quality to those provided by fully trained, registered teachers.

33. Home schooling should not be endorsed as a long-term solution to the complex challenge of resourcing the education system to provide positive and engaging learning experiences for a diverse range of students.

34. The proposed amendments extend the age of access to home schooling to 18. The QTU and IEUA-QNT are aware of extended consultation with stakeholders over the past 12 months and offer in-principle support for the proposed amendments.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments regarding home schooling.

5.0 School disciplinary absences

35. The QTU and IEUA-QNT previously submitted the following abridged text in the 2022 submission to the Department's review of the EGPA. At that time, the Unions indicated that any stakeholder with an interest in school education in Queensland must recognise that teachers and school leaders undertake challenging work in complex environments, and that they do so with professionalism and attention to the interests of all students in their care.

36. The QTU and IEUA-QNT recognise the suite of behaviour management options that are enacted in every minute of every class, and throughout every school in Queensland, in accordance with the professional judgement of Queensland's teachers and school leaders. One representative case from the state's 1,265 schools, comes from Palm-Beach Currumbin SHS in South East Region. At PBC, teachers and school leaders make professional judgements which are framed by the Essential Skills for Classroom Management and positive reinforcement of the school's Optima Code that is Be safe, Be responsible, Be a learner. The school recognises positive behaviour choices with Optima Assemblies. PBC also uses restorative practices.

37. The QTU and IEUA-QNT believe all schooling should provide a quality education in a safe, caring, and supportive environment. A supportive environment requires mutual respect for the welfare, rights and dignity of students, teachers and other school staff and parents/carers, and in an environment that is based on equitable opportunities for all. Behaviour which disrupts this environment should be viewed with concern by the community if it interferes with the rights of students to take full benefit from their years of schooling. No student should be denied the opportunity to learn and socially develop because of disruptive behaviour.

38. The QTU and IEUA-QNT have long held the view that, in addition to the positive behaviour programs and flexible schools that operate throughout Queensland, principals should have the power to suspend students for a specified period,

without the need for prior departmental approval, and in circumstance of the student demonstrating repeated or serious breaches of the school's code of conduct. The Unions hold the view that a student who has been suspended should have no automatic right of further education while serving a period of suspension, and they should not be permitted to enter the school grounds or have contact with school personnel for the duration of the suspension. The QTU and IEUA-QNT support the view that students on suspension are under the complete care of their parents or carers away from the school site. The school has no duty of care during the period of suspension, other than to supply a brief work-program for students suspended for 11-20 days only.

39. For extreme offences or repeated breaches of a school's code of conduct, students may be excluded. The student may have re-entry to a state school by negotiation with another school and with behaviour improvement conditions attached. The Unions contend that a student who has been excluded from a state school must actively participate in mandatory counselling before re-enrolment.
40. The QTU and IEUA-QNT welcome the proposed amendments that allow a principal to delegate the authority of notifying a student about a student disciplinary absence decision. The Unions have consistently held this position throughout the Department review of the EGPA, and their 2022 submission stated support for "an amendment to the EGPA to allow principals to delegate their authority to both make decisions and to notify students about the decision to suspend, propose exclusion, or cancel enrolment to Deputy Principals, Heads of School, or Heads of Campus."

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments regarding school disciplinary absences, namely clause 14 and the insertion of 289A(2) into the EGPA

6.0 Special school enrolments and transfer notes

41. The QTU and IEUA-QNT welcome the proposed amendments that allow a principal of a state special school to directly enrol a student, transferring from another Queensland state special school, without the need to refer the enrolment application to the chief executive or their delegate. The Unions have consistently held this position throughout the Department review of the EGPA.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee supports the proposed amendments regarding special school enrolments and transfer notes.

7.0 State delivered kindergarten

42. The QTU and IEUA-QNT recognise the Department's longstanding interest in aligning state and federal legislation and regulation. The QTU acknowledges that the Department has been engaged in good faith consultation with the Union on matters related to this. Nevertheless, the QTU also notes that the Department has not consulted on the specific early childhood education and care and amendments proposed in the Bill.
43. The QTU recognises that aligning state and federal legislation and regulation might achieve workload efficiencies for school leaders and teachers, however a workload impact statement has not been provided at this time.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee does not support the proposed amendments at this time, until such time as the Department provide a specific workload impact statement.

8.0 Parents and Citizens

44. The QTU has a proud shared history with P&Cs Queensland. We share a mutual commitment to public education throughout Queensland and have a common interest in advancing state schools. The QTU recognises that P&Cs Queensland has been engaged in the DoE's process of review of the EGPA.
45. The QTU maintains the position that any amendments to the EGPA should not adversely impact on the workload of Queensland's state school teaching workforce. The QTU reaffirms the position that any amendments that have the potential to impact on the workload of principals (or their delegates), are not supported.
46. The QTU and IEUA-QNT do not support the proposed amendments that allow for campus associations to be established under provisions that are specific to school councils, namely clauses 17-24. The functions of a school council are established at s81 of the EGPA and are limited by (1) to:
- (a) monitoring the school's strategic direction;
 - (b) approving—
 - (i) plans and policies of the school of a strategic nature; or
 - (ii) other documents affecting strategic matters, including the annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for the school;
 - (c) monitoring the implementation of the plans, policies and other documents mentioned in paragraph (b);
 - (d) advising the school's principal about strategic matters.
47. The QTU and IEUA-QNT contend that duplication or replication of the functions of a school council by campus associations undermines the authority of the school

council and will result in additional work, accountability, and responsibility for school leadership.

48. Insofar as the proposed amendments in the Bill relate to the work of Parent and Citizens Associations, the Unions provide in-principle support.

Recommendation:

The QTU and IEUA-QNT recommend that the Committee does not support clauses 16-24 of the Bill.
