

Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025

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SUBMISSION

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

The Isolated Children's Parents' Association Inc. (ICPA Qld Inc.) advocates for equitable access to quality educational opportunities for all children living in rural and remote areas. ICPA Qld Inc. represents forty-five branches, encompassing over 1300 families throughout rural and remote Queensland.

ICPA Qld Inc. is a voluntary, not-for-profit, apolitical parent organisation. It is the only community-based parent group that represents parents across all educational sectors and levels, including state schools, independent, faith-based, or boarding schools, early childhood and care, through to tertiary education and all approaches used to facilitate access to a continuing and appropriate education.

In regard to the amendments of this Bill, ICPA Qld will provide comments on the amendments that will directly affect the organisation's members and are within ICPA Qld policy.

eKindy

Kindergarten students living in rural and remote areas rely on the valuable service of the eKindy program to utilise qualified early childhood teachers and resources, ensuring they have access to recognised and approved kindergarten programs when distance prohibits face to face access. An essential element of the eKindy program is the interactions of all students when they travel for face-to-face activity days and the importance of engaging online delivery of an interactive age-appropriate program. This important element of the eKindy program sets the foundations for students moving into the next stage of their schooling. Without essential access to centre-based visits during the eKindy program, some students may not be able to access this crucial element of their kindergarten year. It is imperative that eKindy students continue to receive equitable access to the full range of services provided by the delivery of the eKindy program. However, it is necessary that workforce shortages of Early Childhood Teachers are taken into consideration, and students are clustered online within their geographic catchment.

P&Cs

ICPA Qld supports the proposed changes to different campuses of one school being able to form separate P&C Associations, especially when there are vast distances and demographics differences between campuses. Separate P&C Associations will enable the best outcomes for children and families in the schools these associations have been established to service.

Additionally, ICPA Qld welcomes the change which will enable P&Cs to donate funds and goods to other P&Cs that have experienced adverse events. Rural Queensland has experienced several natural disasters over the past five years and true to the Queensland spirit, many non-affected schools offered to assist those in need. It was difficult to guide P&C Associations on the correct protocols as to how they could assist within the parameters of the existing EGP Act.

Transfer Notes

ICPA Qld supports the sharing of transfer notes in a timely manner between schools during the enrolment process to assist the student to receive the best educational outcomes and the support that enhances their learning needs. Sharing of transfer notes in a timely manner, will provide schools with the opportunity to plan, staff and support every student's learning and wellbeing needs from the commencement of their schooling at their new location.

Approved Online Services

The use of approved online educational programs and platforms that assist with the delivery, consolidation and learning engagement of the Australian Curriculum is increasing as learning is adapted to prepare students for future digital learning. A streamlined approach to gaining permission and approval processes for school staff, students and families is imperative to assist with the effective and efficient use of time for all parties. The choice of programs and platforms is vital and should be at the discretion of the school staff to allow for flexible facilitation of subject specific tailored learning, whilst maintaining the safe keeping of students' data is critical.

Special School Enrolments

The Bill amendment to the Act to simplify the enrolment process for students transferring between special schools, reducing the regulatory burden on principals, parents, and students will assist with a streamlined procedure. This will ensure the student, and their family do not have to have time lapses of enrolment and learning due to reassessments and/or added complexity and stress of enrolment when all requirements have previously been assessed.



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