

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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On behalf of the Queensland Teachers Union Members of Redcliffe State High School

Submission to the Parliamentary Committee

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Firstly we would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to read our submission and hear both our commendations and concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Education (General Provisions) Act.

The evidence supplied in this submission is anecdotal from teachers and managers from Redcliffe SHS. The collective experience of this group is extensive. The teachers and managers will be implementing the proposed changes so it seems fitting to consult them on the direct impact of the proposed changes.

QTU members of Redcliffe SHS are encouraged by the extensive consultation that has taken place in the preparation of this Bill. However underlying most of the concern about the proposed changes hinge around workload and support.

QTU Members of Redcliffe SHS have the following concerns:

- 1) Appeals of 11 day suspensions within a calendar year will significantly undermine the professional judgement of school leaders
- 2) Appeals will reduce the ability of schools to remain safe as the impact of violent students will lead to increase incidents of workplace violence for students and staff
- 3) QTU Members may in turn initiate directives for members to refuse to provide instruction for dangerous and violent students on the grounds that other students in the school have a fundamental right to safety and education
- 4) Proposed changes to appeals and support provisions will involve substantial workload increases, job creep as well as place pressure on an education system which is already under-resourced, understaffed and undervalued
- 5) Providing education to students not yet enrolled removes responsibility of parents to ensure their child is enrolled by due dates and should not be the responsibility of a school who is processing their enrolment, schools would not be able to provide student access to online resources and details in the bill are vague at this stage as to what sort of education would need to be provided

While the rationale of assisting and engaging students from diverse backgrounds is commended there needs to be significant resources and staffing to not only establish support provisions but also in school suspensions or alternative programs. Adding to workloads and undermining school managers decisions with over prescriptive conditions and consequences will not improve teacher retainment or improve teaching conditions. The issue of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement is a significant one and alternative programs, flexible schooling options, community supported alternative programs may serve this group more effectively than compromising already vulnerable education system with over prescriptive rules around appeals and suspensions.