



EDUCATION AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mrs RN Menkens MP (Chair)
Mr SA Bennett MP
Mr MA Boothman MP
Mrs YM D'Ath MP
Mr RG Hopper MP
Mr MR Latter MP
Mr NA Symes MP

Staff present:

Ms B Watson (Research Director)
Ms E Booth (Principal Research Officer)

PUBLIC BRIEFING—CATHOLIC EDUCATION SECTOR (QUEENSLAND CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION)

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 5 MARCH 2014

Brisbane

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Committee met at 9.34 am

BYRNE, Mr Mike, Executive Director, Queensland Catholic Education Commission

CHAIR: Welcome. Before I begin, I ask everyone present to please turn off their mobile phones or to switch them to silent mode. I would also ask members of the media who might be recording any proceedings to please adhere to the committee's endorsed media guidelines. Committee staff have a copy of the guidelines available to you should you require one.

This morning we are meeting with Mr Mike Byrne from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. The intention of today's meeting is to have a conversation about the Catholic education sector.

I will now introduce the members of the Education and Innovation Committee. I am Rosemary Menkens, the member for Burdekin and the chair of the committee. The committee members with me are: Mr Ray Hopper, the member for Condamine and deputy chair; Mr Steve Bennett, the member for Burnett; Mr Mark Boothman, the member for Albert; Ms Yvette D'Ath, the member for Redcliffe—whom we welcome to her first meeting today—Mr Michael Latter, the member for Waterford; and Mr Neil Symes, the member for Lytton.

This session is a formal process of the parliament and parliamentary privilege applies to all evidence presented. Any person intentionally misleading the committee is committing a serious offence. While these proceedings are public, you are able to request, through me as chair, that any material or information you provide be kept private and you can object to particular questions a committee member might ask you. You might also wish to take questions on notice if you do not have the information at hand. The proceedings are being recorded and will be transcribed by Hansard. The transcript will be published on the committee's web page once it is available.

I understand Mr Byrne that you are going to get the ball rolling today with an overview of the Catholic education sector and the current issues for that sector. Firstly, though, you have provided us with some material. I would ask the permission of the committee that this be tabled. There being no objection, it is so tabled. Mr Byrne, over to you to start our discussion this morning.

Mr Byrne: Thank you very much. I thank all members of the committee for allowing me the opportunity to talk to you today. What I thought I would do today, with your agreement, is speak briefly about the structure and processes within Catholic education just to give you an overview and then talk to the paper that I have provided to you which has, what I have referred to as, eight emerging themes. What I would like to do, again with your approval, is engage with you in conversation rather than necessarily just speak to you for the time allotted. Can I check the time we have? Is it about three quarters of an hour?

CHAIR: Yes, until 10.15 am.

Mr Byrne: That is fine. Can I refer you first to the brochure that is with the paper. If you open that you will find that there is a diagram that might give you a pictorial view of Catholic education. The commission itself is a peak body. While at a previous time in my career I was a teacher, a deputy principal, a principal and a regional director—mainly in Townsville region—my role now is with the commission. The commission does not actually run any schools itself. Catholic education is somewhat of a complex organisation. It actually is 23 different legal entities. The major entities are the five dioceses. There is the Archdiocese of Brisbane, and there is a diocese centred around the major centres coming down the coast—Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba. They are the five dioceses.

As well as the five dioceses there are 18 other, what we sometimes refer to as, religious institute schools or even congregation schools. You might be familiar with schools such as All Hallows' which is run by the Sisters of Mercy or a series of Christian Brothers schools which are now called Edmund Rice education schools. Gregory Terrace, Nudgee, St Laurence's, for example, would be those sorts of schools. Those schools are within the Catholic education umbrella. Each of those 18 schools is managed autonomously and is accountable to boards and sometimes too has a strong link to the congregations that founded them. Across Queensland we have 294 schools and a little over 140,000 students. About one-fifth of students in Queensland are educated in Catholic schools.

It is a responsibility that we take very seriously. Therefore, our relationship with the state government and the federal government is very important. Governments of both levels provide us a significant amount of funding. It varies a little bit in terms of the proportion that goes to the schools, but about two-thirds of our money comes from government. That is an important part of how we operate. We need to always be both financially accountable and educationally accountable to government in the provision of education.

All of our schools are registered with the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board. That is a group that has been in place for a little over 10 years. That registers every school. If a new school is created, that school has to go through a registration process. Each of those schools has to go through a cyclical review process to ensure that they are constantly improving in terms of their performance in education.

That is a bit about the structure of Catholic education. Can I pause there—and I would like to do this from time to time—to see if there are questions of clarification about any of that. You are all pretty familiar with that. I am sure at various times you have visited Catholic schools within your own electorates.

CHAIR: I certainly have six within my electorate. They are a very important part of schooling in my electorate.

Mr Byrne: Thank you very much, Rosemary. I know that Yvette does that. I know in her previous role she was doing that as well. That really is important. I think that sense of connection between you and our schools is important. I would like to think that you are always made welcome in Catholic schools—not just at the time of elections but at other times. I hope you have a sense of relationship with our schools. I think that is really important. We encourage our principals to develop that relationship with you. Part of my appearing before you today is to assure you of that sense of partnership and beyond today if there are any suggestions you might have as to how we can engage further with you. Is that all right in terms of the introductory part or overview?

CHAIR: Thank you very much. We appreciate that.

Mr Byrne: What I was going to do now was name the different issues. I probably could have written down another eight or 10 issues. Some of those would be in your mind as well. I am happy to engage about other issues that are not on this list. This was not meant to be exclusive. I was going to name each of the issues. I will not read out everything. Then what I would like to do is have a conversation with you about these issues or any other issues you might wish to raise.

A big issue for all of us in education at moment is quality teachers. We all know that whatever the funding, whatever the relationship of governance, the research clearly shows that what matters most is the quality of teachers. You would know from your own school days that quality teachers are the people who make a difference. It is not just about teaching the curriculum; it is about the person they are and the role model they are to students in the school. That relationship is terribly important. We are always looking at ways we can do that better.

One of the things we are doing at the moment is entering into an agreement with the universities that provide teacher education to look at a range of initiatives that are being progressed at both a federal level and state level. At a state level, the present government has made available to us what is called Great Teachers = Great Results funding. It is a funding package that is being applied to all sectors. It is an opportunity, I think, for us to look at the quality of teaching and to be able to put appropriate strategies in place. Within the Catholic sector it will differ according to the context of the school and what the principal and the school authority think is appropriate. But certainly improving teacher quality is a major issue.

The Australian curriculum is a major issue for us. It was introduced some years back now. It is an opportunity for us to have a curriculum framework right across Australia that is consistent. So instead of having eight different authorities all doing curriculum, in Western Australia or in Queensland or wherever—and also as people move around, and I know from my Townsville days when there were Defence Force people there, they can be in different years in different states—having some sort of consistency, I think, is a good thing.

It is a major exercise though. It is managed by an organisation at a national level, ACARA. That organisation frames up the curriculum but with support from the states. You would be aware that education is in fact the state's responsibility constitutionally. So there is always a little bit of tension there between the federal government in providing this infrastructure, which I think we need to do to be able to have a national curriculum, and the states giving assent to that and then to be able to implement the curriculum, because it is often said that the Commonwealth government does not run any schools. It is the state and then the various other sectors that actually run the schools.

CHAIR: Excuse me, Mr Byrne, do you mind if we ask questions as we go?

Mr Byrne: I am very happy to do that. And, in terms of quality teachers, I think it would be better if we did that as we went along.

CHAIR: Yes, because you did mention having a conversation. I realise education is a state perspective but, from a Catholic education perspective, how closely do you work with other states or do you have shared curriculum with other states?

Mr Byrne: Yes, we do. The story of Catholic education is really from the ground up. There were many little parish schools that started before Queensland as a government started. Our first Catholic school in Queensland was where the Myer Centre is today. So all those Catholic schools existed well before the organisation that I work with existed. Our organisation was created in 1973 to coordinate the Catholic schools that largely already existed, and that happened in every state.

So now we have a National Catholic Education Commission but strangely—and you would understand why—peak organisations are usually small organisations. Our national body is a very small organisation. It has about eight or 10 people in it. At a state level we have an office of about 40 people, and largely that is around funding and policy issues in terms of the roles people have. The big part of our administration is in the schools and also at diocesan level—that is where the action really is. There is a lot of cooperation now between the states. That has probably emerged more in the last 10 years as we have had national curriculum and national a lot of other things in terms of governance. We also get more of our money from the federal government than we do from the state government. Therefore, our funding relationship with the federal government is also very important.

As well as being on a state committee here in Queensland for the management of Catholic education, I also sit on a national Catholic education group. So they talk a lot in terms of good practice, but at the same time we strongly believe in Catholic education and the principle of subsidiarity—that is, the best decisions happen where the action is. So it is very much a school based decision-making process. But where we need to act together, even for things like this, then it is important for us to act together. But I do not run schools. I need to respect the local director. I am not the boss of the director in Townsville or Rockhampton. They are accountable to their bishop. I play a coordinating role. So that is very much of the character of what is Catholic education. Are there any other clarifications around that? Are there any comments around quality teaching, which was the first issue I touched on?

Mr LATTER: Yes, I was interested that you mentioned you were trying to engage with universities to get better teacher quality outcomes. Do you have any comment around specific shortfalls there or specific items that should be addressed in a holistic approach?

Mr Byrne: Yes, I am happy, and Bernice indicated when I was chatting to her yesterday that this was an issue of interest for you. The teaching profession has uneven graduates across Queensland. If you were to talk to the director in the Brisbane region, they have a fairly significant surplus of really good quality teachers who for various reasons want to stay in the Brisbane archdiocesan region. If you were to talk to the director of the Rockhampton region, they still have some positions that are not filled. So getting people to move and to be able to have that spread of people across the state is still a major issue for us.

The other part of that inconsistency is subject areas. We are still looking for maths and science teachers. That is still a major problem for us in Catholic education. I know from talking to colleagues in the state system it is also an issue for them. It is the same with the trades, and I will mention in a few minutes what we refer to as VET, vocational education and training. Getting people into teaching manual arts is a big problem. Many universities are not offering training courses, because there is little demand for them. So we are needing to be a little bit more imaginative in terms of training those people. It might be people who are already skilled tradespeople who then want to come into teaching. So one of the conversations we are having with the universities is how we can recognise their prior skills and then for them to do a two-year course that will enable them to be registered as a teacher and bring all those professional skills to the classroom. So they are sorts of issues we are looking at. Michael, it is a significant issue for us all.

CHAIR: In many cases what you are saying is that the professionalism and maturity of those students will possibly make better teachers, too.

Mr Byrne: Yes, that is true. We are getting used to the idea, too, that the nature of people's employment now is that they do not come out of university and be a teacher for life. So even after five years we are losing a lot of really good people. That is also for a whole variety of reasons. They develop skills as a teacher and there are other avenues and various professions that they want to

go into. But people come back. People go and train as an engineer and then they want to become a teacher. So that notion that we all were the same and we just took different steps in how someone's career grew is not the reality, especially of our young ones now.

Mr BENNETT: I am just curious in that you alluded to the government policy of Great Teachers = Great Results. Are you starting to see some tangible outcomes with that investment in that space?

Mr Byrne: It is a program that does not start until 2015.

Mr BENNETT: But preparedness for it.

Mr Byrne: During this year the government has provided some seed funding for school systems and for schools to get ready for what they are going to do. Just this week I met with a number of our congregation school principals to talk to them about what could they do to get ready. They have not decided yet, but one of the things they are considering is getting together and just developing a smorgasbord of ideas: if they had some extra money, what would they spend it on? Some might, for example, be able to release some really good teachers in their school to do teacher coaching. So instead of teaching a variety of subjects—they still might have some subjects they would teach—they would have free time in their week to work with beginning teachers or someone who maybe working in a new subject area that they have not worked in. They would have special people in the school who could then work with them, coach them, watch them in teaching practice and give them feedback, not in an inspectorial sort of way but in much the same way as a sporting coach might direct someone in a sporting area to be better. There is again good research indicators that those sorts of positions can really make a difference.

There are other things, too, that we can do with beginning teachers. You do not come out of teachers college or university and be a good teacher in the first year. So it is about working with those people over a three- to five-year period. So schools could put instructors in place. The other thing they could look at is teachers experiencing other settings—so giving a teacher a two-week period off to go and visit another school where there is really good practice happening. That could even be overseas, going to some conference where there is a science education program that we know is really good—so going and looking at that and trying to bring it back into Australian practice. So they are the sorts of things they are considering.

Mr BENNETT: I was just wondering also about the conversations you are having with the tertiary sector about the supply of specialist teachers which Michael alluded to earlier. Are you getting some positive results there now, because you did allude to the VET issues as well?

Mr Byrne: Yes, we are. There is another important structure for the teachers, and that is the Queensland College of Teachers. So we have conversations with them regularly so that they are aware. The value of the Queensland College of Teachers is that they keep the statistics right across Queensland. They also have an important role in having conversations with the tertiary institutes about the quality of teacher training but also where the supply needs to be. So they are monitoring those figures. They are talking to employing authorities. So the Queensland College of Teachers acts as a broker between the employing authorities who need to employ the teachers and the various teacher institutions—University of Queensland et cetera—who are providing teachers.

Mr LATTE: Bearing in mind, you still have a lot to go through here and time is a factor, I am interested that you mentioned that the distribution of teachers is a difficulty. That is a difficulty right across the board for all schools.

Mr Byrne: Yes, it is.

Mr LATTE: Have you made any headway or is there anything that you think would work in terms of assisting in that redistribution of teachers in terms of awards or rewards other than a bigger pay cheque, I suppose?

Mr Byrne: Yes. The bigger pay cheque is one. Teachers in their early years do tend to be fairly well paid in relation to other professions. But what happens is that after about an eight-year period it flattens out and, unless a teacher goes into a deputy principal or principal type position, keeping good teachers in the classroom is a big issue. So they have in recent years looked at the wage structure and there have been improvements made. But I still think there is probably room for more of that.

One of the organisations that I have not mentioned yet is AITSL, which is a peak body at a national level that has set a framework for the skills that teachers should have, going from a beginning teacher to a very experienced teacher. So that framework is being picked up by the various colleges of teachers in each of the states. So it is a national framework and I think that is a

very good thing as well. It enables the universities to have a clear understanding of their goalposts—what does a good teacher look like? It is not just the delivery of the curriculum in the classroom but also within the profession—how do they skill themselves? It is about having relationships with parents. How do they invite the parents into the teaching process as well and how do they do that in a way that does not threaten them as a teacher but invites the parent in in a collaborative sort of way? They are the sorts of things we are talking to the institutes about.

Ms D'ATH: In relation to the report that you have provided to us, you note under quality teachers about seeking alignment where possible with national education reforms and state initiatives such as Great Teachers = Great Results. What sort of alignment are you talking about and have you identified where there are particular barriers or where in fact the reforms might be going in opposite directions? Have you looked any further into that alignment?

Mr Byrne: Yes. We are using very much those two structures that I mentioned—AITSL and the Queensland College of Teachers—as being where those conversations are held. Employing authorities meet regularly with those two structures. We also use the AITSL framework when we are doing teacher development with teachers so that it is not a hit and miss thing in terms of skill development. So now very much part of the school culture is individual conversations with teachers about their own skill base, about where they need to improve. Again, that is not done in an inspectorial way of trying to make them feel bad. This is about sitting down, even with an experienced teacher, and asking, 'How can you be better?' We are encouraging those conversations to be held at a school level. That is a big part of the agenda.

The other part is trying to ascertain what are the best ways of having professional development so that again it does not happen just exclusively within one school, that there is a sense of the profession itself growing and being better. It is still a struggle, I think, in a state like Queensland. The reality is that oftentimes our less experienced teachers are in country areas, so our students who are the most disadvantaged are the ones who have the least experienced teachers. That is just a fact of life. It is what happens. But we need to acknowledge that and work on that as an issue, and we are really trying to do that within Catholic education.

One of the issues I will mention, too, in terms of the curriculum is that within Queensland there has been the creation of C2C, Curriculum into the Classroom. That is a very good resource that the government has now made available to Catholic schools and independent schools, even though it was expressly developed by the department, and we are very much appreciative of the minister doing that. That has only happened this year. That has not started rolling out much into our schools yet, but I expect over the next 12 months it will. Yvette, is there anything else you have in mind in terms of that alignment?

Ms D'ATH: It is just whether you think there is that alignment there. I think it is very important with what we are doing at an educational level both state and federal that we are working in the same direction and finding out from the sector, because it is the sector who is best placed to tell us whether in fact it is seeing that alignment and where there are barriers and whether it believes that the state and federal levels are talking to each other enough, because we are basically trying to provide the support you need in the sector as opposed to the barriers.

Mr Byrne: I think that is happening. I think the AITSL framework is a very good tool for us to be able to have those conversations around. Certainly, in terms of my role, on Friday of this week I will be meeting in Sydney with not only people from the Catholic sector but across all sectors. It is a policy framework that the federal government, even the previous government, has to try to make sure there is cooperation across the sectors. There is still a sense of difference, and I think that is healthy and always will be, but there is also a sense of working together. I think again especially in country areas that is what we need to be able to do.

Ms D'ATH: Can I just ask one more question. VET in schools is an area that I am particularly interested in, as you are aware. Your statistics are quite high—50 per cent of year 12 leavers in 2012 received a VET qualification. We are seeing that across all sectors which I think is very important. Is QCEC doing any analysis or collecting any data of what is happening to those year 12 leavers? Are they continuing on with their apprenticeships or traineeships? Are they getting into employment quicker? Obviously we have that problem of high youth unemployment. VET courses in schools are fantastic but are they leading to employment and further education?

Mr Byrne: Yes, there is. Across Queensland there is what is referred to as a destination study. It has been going for a number of years. What happens is that when the students exit grade 12 we are tracking where they are going and whether they are completing courses, and it is an excellent tool. The students have to fill it out themselves. When it first started we were nervous that

they did not have that interest or whatever. But the actual completion rate by the schools and the students is very high. So we have very good data around that. There are good indications within that. VET in Queensland is the strongest by far of any other state in Australia. So it is very much a good news story. But it is one we need to keep working on as well.

There are changes afoot still at the federal level. The new government is still working out what their engagement with the VET area is going to be. Within schools over the last five years there was the construction of trade training centres. That enabled a school to get funding to build a facility. It would be around what the school would have to demonstrate was a work skill area. So it would have to be something in the local area that was going to feed appropriate training into what was local for that area. There were good results around that, but the federal government has decided not to continue that program in its present form. They are still yet to decide exactly what form that is the going to look like into the future, but they are talking to us about that. Again, I was at a meeting in Sydney last week when we were talking about this issue in terms of what was the best way to go forward.

I think the conversations are happening. I think because of the change of government there has been a bit of a stall at the federal level, but I do not think we want to interpret that as a lack of interest. I think it is more that they will be wanting to put their own branding on that a little bit and their own way of doing business. They also have—and I support this—a strong relationship with the actual employer groups so that we would make sure that the schools are not over here doing with what the schools think the kids want to do and we have another group over here of employers saying, 'You are not giving us in some ways the people that we want.' So it is important that we have those conversations between them. They are already happening but I think we could probably do that a bit better, too.

Ms D'ATH: Is the QCEC able to give us any data that you have collected—

Mr Byrne: Yes.

Ms D'ATH: I do not know if you would have the 2012 figures, but it would be really interesting to know what happened to that cohort of 57 per cent.

Mr Byrne: I do not have it with me but we could certainly look at some historical data around this destination study and just track, because I think it is important that we do not just keep doing things expecting them to work. We have to be able to look at them and say, 'What is this delivering and does the system need to be in any way adjusted to make sure it can work better?' So I will get back to you.

CHAIR: There is certainly very relevant information to come out of that. I appreciate that. I realise that we have been jumping around a little bit.

Mr Byrne: That is fine.

CHAIR: I would like to take you to No. 7 at this stage as time is starting to move on. As you are aware, and you also gave good submissions—

Mr Byrne: Yes, you did a lot work around this issue.

CHAIR:—into the inquiry that this committee did, the ACER review is currently underway, I would be interested in your comments in maybe the direction in which it seems as though it could be going and what the feelings of the Catholic education area is on that?

Mr Byrne: Thank you for the good work. It was a major exercise that you did to get your head around that issue. My understanding is that your report has gone through to ACER and they have certainly considered your views in the process that they are going through at the moment.

CHAIR: Our report probably went more broadly than what the actual terms of reference were.

Mr Byrne: Yes. In many ways, while you were looking at the particular area of maths and science, it was a much broader issue than maths and science. It is about the nature of assessment. It is about the fact that that assessment can be relied upon. So it is about issues of reliability and validity, making sure that if someone got a particular grade level in Townsville how did that compare to a grade level in Brisbane. So this review is about those sorts of issues of comparability.

It has been a long time—a bit over 20 years—since the OP system operated in Queensland. The architect of that, Professor Nancy Viviani, always said that that was a system that would suit Queensland for about 15 years. So we are beyond that use-by date a little bit. I think across the profession there is a realisation that the system needs to be looked at. In terms of our perspective

on the current review, there are now documents out for people to engage in to have an understanding of where the reviewers are going. Again, I would encourage you to look at that. You would be very interested in that, I think, having given your thought to what you did in the previous review.

In terms of the profession, what I am finding is that there are very much divided views. This is around, to put it starkly, do we have external exams versus the school moderated system or is it a blend? At the moment it is some sort of blend of still keeping part of the school moderated system. As to whether that part is 10 per cent, 50 per cent or more, I think that is still up for discussion. Then in terms of some other test—what we currently call a QCS test—is there something there that is used as a way of making sure that the comparability is there as well? What I am finding within our own sector, the Catholic sector, is very much divided views. People are still coming to understand what the model potentially looks like. What we are doing is engaging with our own staff to help them understand what the new model might look like because you cannot make a judgement about it until you know what it looks like.

CHAIR: None of us know yet.

Mr Byrne: The minister is quite clear that he is quite open. He wants the best system. He does not have a preconceived view about what is right and what is wrong. I think it is up to the profession now to really engage in that. It is a complex issue but it is also a very, very important issue, and I think we just need to have that conversation. I think what is emerging—I am getting this advice, too, from other sectors—is that not everyone is putting up their hands and saying it should be this or it should be that. You can go into a staffroom and you get all the different views, whether it should be at all or whether it should be 50 per cent or some other number. So that is where it is up to. I personally believe that the school based moderated system has delivered something very special in Queensland.

CHAIR: It has.

Mr Byrne: I would be sorry to see it go completely, but I think there are certainly ways in which it can be improved if it were to go on. But also I think that parents are looking for a sense of comparability and consistency that they can understand. I think there is a complexity in the current process that is almost incomprehensible at times. So we need to be able to be clear.

CHAIR: Thank you for that, Mr Byrne. Sadly, our time is marching on. I know there are other comments you would like to make. I would like to bring up No. 10, which is the specialist subject teachers. As you are aware, we now have the Auditor-General's report. After morning tea we are having a further briefing from officers of the department on the implementation of the Auditor-General's report and where it is at. I would be interested in your comments on the specialist teachers, teachers who are teaching out of field and the difficulty that I know the education sector is facing right across Queensland. I would be interested in your comments and maybe how you are able to address it in the case of the Catholic education system.

Mr Byrne: It is a very significant issue. We are talking about quality teaching, having someone in front of a class, say, a science class. This is where even in our NAPLAN testing and other testing has shown that our science results are not as good as they could be. You would know with anything that, if you have a skilful science teacher who can really explain things and bring it alive, it makes an enormous difference to the quality as opposed to someone who is in front of a class and not a qualified teacher.

In terms of specific data, I do not have that to hand. Again, I would be happy to have further conversations with the Queensland College of Teachers. Even if you are investigating those sorts of areas further, Mr John Ryan, who is the Chief Executive Officer, or Mr Joe McCorley, who is the chair of that group, would be very happy to engage with you on those issues, because not only do they have the data but that is the group that is actually having the conversations with the sectors and also with the universities to try to do something about it.

The other difficulty is the one I mentioned before about the unevenness of the supply of teachers across the state and just trying to unpack some of those issues. Part of it I think will always be the benefit that people have from living in the south-east. But also it is about really promoting to people the benefits of being in our country areas. So often we hear stories of young ones especially going into country areas, in some ways unwillingly, and then getting there and really enjoying it, not only professionally but also in terms of the lifestyle and the benefits they have in those areas. I probably have not answered that as fully as I might, but I am happy to take that issue on board a little more and get back to you with some more data around trends in gaps in the teaching force.

CHAIR: As I mentioned, we will be having a public briefing at 10.30 from the department's perspective, which may be of interest to you.

Mr Byrne: Yes, it would be indeed.

CHAIR: Mr Byrne, disappointingly, the time seems to be coming to an end.

Mr Byrne: Thank you very much for your time.

CHAIR: Is there anything, in the brief one or two minutes left, that you would like to add, because we really do appreciate your time. It has been extremely interesting as well as educational for us.

Mr Byrne: Thank you for giving us the opportunity. As I said, I think our partnership with government is really important. Our cooperation across the three sectors in Queensland is important. We always have a sense of understanding our differences but at the same time a sense that there is much in common, and what we should be doing is fostering that. I think the minister's recent decision about making C2C available is a major step forward and we appreciate that.

Also, on the horizon now for you is the revamped Queensland Studies Authority. The legislation went through recently. There will be a change of name there, but it will be more than a change of name. I think there are various changes that are going on there. So I would say to you as a committee to keep an eye on that structure because it also goes right across the sectors, and I think that is an important way in which we need to work together. Thank you very much. Your good work and your time is much appreciated.

CHAIR: Mr Byrne, thank you very much for your time this morning because it has been most interesting. I urge all those with an interest in the work of the Education and Innovation Committee to subscribe to the committee's email subscription list via the Queensland parliament's website. I now declare this meeting closed.

Committee adjourned at 10.16 am