



Queensland Teachers' Union

Submission to

Inquiry into the Education Legislation

Amendment Bill 2013

14 May 2013

QTU Submission to Inquiry into the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2013

The QTU represents over 44,000 school teachers and leaders in Queensland state schools and TAFE Institutes, and is widely regarded as the voice of the profession, on a range of industrial and professional issues. The QTU worked closely with the previous Bligh government to reinstate the preparatory (prep) year of schooling, commencing in trial form in 2005.

Prior to the roll out of prep, the QTU, along with other key stakeholders, was involved in the consultation process, which determined many aspects of the prep year including the selection of the initial prep trial schools, the negotiation of prep teacher aide hours, the content of the Early Years curriculum, and the design of purpose built prep facilities to meet the needs of both students and teachers.

As a direct result of this consultation, a quality year of schooling has been added to the education provision for Queensland students. The introduction of the prep year, which effectively took the part-time preschool provision to a full time provision for a cohort of students who were on average, six months younger, has meant that the provision of education for Queensland children has expanded.

The QTU supports the amendment of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* which includes the prep year in a state school student's entitlement to a basic allocation of semesters of State Education. It is appropriate that the prep year be considered part of the compulsory years of schooling offered to all Queensland students. The QTU notes that the definition of compulsory school age at S.9 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* has not been amended to incorporate the prep year. The QTU would support such an amendment.

There is a distinct lack of clarity in the legislative provisions around home schooling and subsequent access to the remaining allocation. It is the QTU's submission that this particular section needs redrafting to avoid confusion. The QTU does not support the current "Home Schooling" concept where children do not have to be enrolled in the Department's distance education program if their parents/carers choose not to send them to a school. It is the government's responsibility to ensure appropriate accountability and monitoring processes are in place, so that students do not become lost from the system.

The QTU also supports the amendment to allow for the cancellation of international student enrolments at state schools due to non-payment of fees. International schools students who do not pay their fees on time cannot be expected to utilise the resources and services of state schools without contributing to the cost of providing these services.

The QTU declines to comment on the proposed amendments to the childcare act and the accreditation of Non-State Schools act. The unions that provide coverage for workers in these sectors are better placed to provide their views on these amendments.



Graham Moloney
General Secretary