



QUEENSLAND  
TEACHERS' UNION  
OF EMPLOYEES

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13 September 2013

Mrs Rosemary Menkens  
Chairman  
Education and Innovation Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mrs Menkens

**Re: Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee regarding the above Bill. Unfortunately due to difficulties in accessing relevant information the Queensland Teachers' Union (QTU) is unable to provide a comprehensive submission at this time and would seek to provide a full submission to the Committee by Wednesday 18 September 2013.

The QTU acknowledges a number of changes proposed by the Bill that may go toward enhancing discipline in Queensland schools but also has a number of key issues of which the QTU believes the committee should be aware.

Key elements of the Bill that the QTU supports include:

- The better specification of criteria to be used for suspension and exclusion of students from Queensland state schools
- The improved timeframes for principals with respect to responding to issues around suspension and exclusions
- The apparent reduction of legislative red tape within the Bill
- Changes within the Bill that make it explicit actions outside of the school can be taken into account to determine their impact on the good order and conduct of the school. However, while recognising this as a positive the QTU is conscious that schools should not be viewed as having a role in managing students' lives and issues with behaviour outside of school should primarily be managed by parents or caregivers.

The QTU has identified a number of limitations of the Bill.

Address all correspondence to:

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Some of these limitations go to the concept of double jeopardy, the principles of natural justice, continuing education during suspension and detention (specifically outside school hour detention).

With the release of the Bill for consultation, the QTU sought to meet with Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE) officers to seek clarification of the policies and procedures that would be put in place to support the new legislation. At the time the QTU advised DETE that it would be limited in providing a comprehensive response to the Bill in the absence of the proposed policies and procedures to support its implementation. A commitment was given to forward these to the QTU to support our making a submission, however, these have not been provided to the Union to date.

During the meeting with DETE, the QTU raised concerns about the implementation of the Bill within schools. The QTU highlighted that the removal of processes from the Bill would need to be detailed elsewhere. It questioned the support that will be provided to principals, especially newly appointed principals, with respect to the operation of behaviour management within schools and the implementation of the Bill. DETE advised they would be available in the policy and procedures documentation.

Additionally the QTU raised issues with the funding to support the introduction of the changes. The Minister has identified that the changes will be implemented within existing resources, however, the current resources are limited with respect to the support that can be provided to schools. Had the Government not removed 200 resource teachers from high schools, some of these pressures may have been alleviated.

Consequently, in the absence of the detail that would be accessed through the policies and procedures that DETE has developed around the *Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013* the QTU has been stymied in its efforts to meet the submission deadline of Friday 13 September 2013. Consequently the QTU would seek to provide a more fulsome submission, further detailing the Union's position by Wednesday 18 September 2013.

Additionally the QTU would seek to appear before any hearings of the Parliamentary Committee to provide a more comprehensive and detailed outline of the above summary.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'K. J. Ruttiman'.

Kate Ruttiman  
Deputy General Secretary