



Speech by

**CATE MOLLOY**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

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Hansard 11 September 2001

**EDUCATION [ACCREDITATION OF NON-STATE SCHOOLS] BILL**

**Ms MOLLOY** (Noosa—ALP) (5.13 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill. As has already been noted by my colleagues, this bill acts to ensure only comprehensive, positive outcomes for the children of Queensland. Accountability is a commitment all schools will welcome, I am sure.

Provisional accreditation will be used in cases where applications for accreditation relate to intended schools or intended modifications to schools. They will be made on the basis of plans and the accreditation considerations will be made on the same basis—that is, on paper. This will give the school the opportunity to showcase its intention to aspire to excellence, which this government encourages. Again, any school worth its salt will welcome this opportunity.

To ensure that the final accreditation decision takes account of the reality of the school's development, facilities and actual compliance with the accreditation standards, the accreditation process includes a period of provisional accreditation, which is granted on the basis of the application. This process gives the school the opportunity to strive for and achieve the outcomes necessary to become fully operational. Again, in order to guarantee that the needs of the children are met, the criteria for achieving best outcomes are in the public interest.

Our children are the future. This Labor government is committed to ensuring the best education for all Queenslanders. A school which has achieved provisional accreditation has up to three years to achieve accreditation. This period will allow for unforeseen difficulties in the timetable for school construction or development, such as unexpected delays to building schedules because of the weather, et cetera. A school may operate for only 12 months as a provisionally accredited school. Through this measure the minister is again exacting accountability of service providers—in a fair way, I might add. Following this, a review of the school's facilities and compliance is undertaken as a basis for granting full accreditation.

I would like to reflect on the way non-government schools in my electorate are operating. Before I do that, I would like to reflect on my own education. I was taught by Catholic nuns in Melbourne, the Faithful Companions of Jesus. I spent my formative years in a small Catholic primary school, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and then went on to Genazzano Convent in Kew. My parents went without to pay for the fees. I had a great education and will treasure those memories. My brothers were educated by Marist Brothers. All members of my family have made choices for their family, with enrolling their children in both non-government and government schools. We have all been rewarded by the choices we were able to make.

I believe that the non-government schools in my electorate are also offering quality education to our kids, as are our government schools. I have had the pleasure of talking with Brother Daniel Hollamby, the principal of St Thomas More school. This is a delightful school of 535 children. I know many families whose children attend St Thomas More, because we are a close community. St Thomas More has a dedicated parents and friends association. The president, Michael Phipps, works tirelessly for the school with all the other dedicated P&F members. This bill will showcase the commitment of this community, and I wish them well.

I also have other friends and acquaintances whose children attend the Good Shepherd Lutheran school. Drs Michael and Debra Harker, parents of Amy, speak highly of this wonderful school. Earlier this year a group of children from the Lutheran school attended parliament and met with me.

From the intelligent interaction I enjoyed with them, I could tell that they were receiving high-quality education.

Our good fortune continues with the quality non-government facilities in the Noosa electorate. We have a Steiner school. If members know of the Steiner schools throughout Australia they will be aware of the quality education they provide. Our Steiner school has no principal but has a college of teachers who meet weekly to make decisions and also has a business manager, Kathleen Rundall. There are 165 students there. I know the commitment of Steiner schoolteachers, bursars and families, having had a long association with the Armidale Steiner school in New South Wales. I have seen the struggle of these smaller schools and I have witnessed what lovely young students they turn out. The commitment of families there is second to none.

The Noosa electorate non-government schools are very much part of the rich fabric of our community, in much the same way as were the schools which I attended many years ago. I remember government-imposed teaching accreditation back in those days. Yes, there was a little unease purely as a result of change, and perhaps there will be unease with the implementation of this bill. However, I am confident that the schools in the Noosa electorate will continue in their levels of excellence and will welcome this accreditation process to show everyone just how terrific they are.

I have educated my children in state schools for philosophical reasons. My eldest daughter is doing well at university. My next daughter is also doing well, as is my youngest, at local state schools. Both the state and non-government schools in my electorate reflect the broader caring community—a community that will not be divided by Kemp's elitist, user pays, punish the poor tactics. s a bipartisan issue.

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