



Speech by

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EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) BILL

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (5.55 pm): I am pleased to rise to speak in the debate on the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Bill 2005. In doing so I support the shadow minister for education in supporting this bill. As we have heard, the bill abolishes the Board of Teacher Registration and in its place establishes the Queensland College of Teachers. The bill also sets out a number of provisions regarding the requirement for teachers to continue with ongoing professional training to maintain their licence. This is very important as in the past I am sure there have been teachers who have not extended on their learning and have been providing students with a one-dimensional, not-up-to-date form of teaching with often leads to frustrated students and a poor sense of self-worth for the teacher.

This in recent years has changed and, just like in many other professions, the emphasis on professional development has increased and teachers are now continually educated on the ever-changing strategies for educating our children. Involved in this process also will be a self-reporting of professional development activities and a light audit of those reports. I think this is a very sensible way of managing the system.

I am also pleased to see that the emphasise has been placed on provisions in this bill to protect our children. Nothing is more important than protecting our children. I was very pleased to read in this bill that the provisions contained within it are similar to those provisions in the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian Act 2000. I am also pleased to see an efficient method of dealing with complaints against teachers. The two-tiered structure of the committees makes sure that some matters are dealt with a certain way, without overcommitting resources, while others that are more serious are dealt with in the fair and intensive way that they should be.

I am concerned about a number of aspects. Firstly, I am concerned about the increase in fee from \$25 to \$60. It has always been the case that these fees were to cover administration fees, which is fair enough. However, an increase of 140 per cent would indicate that the fee is not just going to cover administration fees and is going to be a form of revenue raising for the government. I would be pleased if the minister could stand up here and tell the House exactly why the jump has to occur and where the extra money is needed in the processing of these licences. Or is it the case that this money will be used to prop up another area of education and the minister is stinging teachers for the shortfalls of his own government?

I also feel that it is important that there is a uniform approach across-the-board when determining what is and what is not an appropriate community standard with regard to the classification of things as a minor or a serious offence. I would hate to see a case where a teacher is put through the wringer for an offence that was not that major to begin with. Similarly, the community would not like to see a situation where a teacher is given a tap on the wrists for an incident that required a more severe punishment according to generally accepted community standards. All in all, this is a fairly good bill but the opposition will be watching its operation closely. I commend the bill to the House.