



Speech by

Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL



Mr BOOTHMAN (Albert—LNP) (4.10 pm): As John F Kennedy said—

Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.

Throughout the ages, education has continued to build upon itself to define our society and influence what we think and how we think. Education helps build hopes and dreams, and is a fundamental right for all Queenslanders. Today I stand here in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2012. This bill is about building a future for Queenslanders, regardless of their financial situation or physical location.

E-kindy has been developed to recognise and ensure children in remote locations and those with medical conditions have access to quality kindergarten programs. This bill provides that service free of charge to all children who are eligible, regardless of their remote location or medical issues. This new innovative program will be delivered by the state schools of distance education infrastructure and administration. It makes good common sense to use the expertise and experience of the schools of distance education in delivering this program. Furthermore, distance education has a proven track record in designing individually tailored educational programs, utilising the experience of teaching staff who, over the years, have developed professional networks and inclusive programs that cater for every child's circumstances.

The new program will help children with the transition to distance education programs, giving remote students the same access to top-quality education that the rest of Queensland receives and has come to expect. I can say with a great deal of conviction that it will bring children across the state closer. I had the privilege of using similar software at a local school. It removes the divides and creates a whole new era of learning. I found it fascinating to watch teachers and students interacting over great distances in real time. As technology grows, so will the use of this visionary software. What was thought impossible is possible through technology. Through the use of iPads, Galaxy tablets, smart phones, fast wireless and broadband networks, technology is continuing to change the way we interact with each other and learn. Teaching students from an early age about the marvels of technology only enhances learning outcomes and prepares them for the demands of schools and future career paths.

The estimated cost for this insightful program will not place any further budgetary pressures on our precarious state deficit. It will be funded by the Australian government under the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education. I wish to thank the Isolated Children's Parents' Association, which represents families residing in remote locations throughout this great state. Those people know first hand the difficulties of having children in remote locations and the burdens associated with providing them with world-class education. E-kindy is a leap forward in thinking and a huge step forward in providing resources for our remote kids.

I wish to bring the attention of the House to the National Professional Standards for Teachers. The primary purpose of this agreement is to implement national professional standards for teachers in all jurisdictions. I should note that the national professional standards have been developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Many other industries have been subjected to standards to

ensure consistencies across professions. For example, the professional standards adopted by the financial and banking industry have been well documented. The adoption of nationally recognised standards eliminates confusion across jurisdictions. The primary purpose of the professional standards is to articulate what teachers are expected to know and practical methods for delivering the standards. I should add that the function of the Queensland College of Teachers is to develop, maintain and amend professional standards only within Queensland.

Our government is committed to reducing red tape and our adoption of the national scheme provides the ability for Queensland and Australian teachers to move seamlessly throughout Australia's education system. The national registration and accreditation scheme will apply in all jurisdictions throughout Australia. Teachers wishing to move interstate will have the ability to apply for positions faster and more efficiently. A national standard has the ability to provide a less stressful transition environment and gives schools a larger selection of industry professionals. As a safeguard, the bill provides the Queensland College of Teachers with the function to develop or adopt other professional standards in the event that the national professional standards are not maintained in the future. This bill cannot be classed as anything but positive for education and the future of our schools.

Finally, I would like to mention the significant changes to the anniversary letters that are sent to those who have been disqualified from attending school. Under the current system, letters are sent to disqualified students and their parents to remind them of their exclusion. I understand the letters are even sent to students who have successfully re-enrolled in alternative schooling programs at a state school or in another educational program. Not only does this create unnecessary paperwork that is wasteful but also I believe the system is detrimental to a student who has undertaken alternative schooling. I believe it is more logical to inform the individual about the process of seeking revocation of a permanent exclusion decision at the time the decision is made, not on the anniversary. This will include advice containing review rights, revocation of the decision and details of the DETE website if further information is required. Regional case managers will be allocated to the excluded person, to engage and facilitate the person's re-enrolment into education. They will also follow up with the individual one month after enrolment in a new educational facility, and again after six months. This will reduce red tape for regional staff officers and allow more resources to be allocated to other educational services, which will mean more resources for the general student population.

I wish to thank the chair of the committee, Rosemary Menkens, for doing a fantastic job, as she always does. I would also like to thank the minister for introducing this bill. I would like to wish Julie Grantham all the best. It was a pleasure to have her as the director-general of the department. I commend this bill to the House.