




Speech by

Michael Latter

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

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EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr LATTER** (Waterford—LNP) (3.55 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Education Legislation Amendment Bill, but before doing so I would like to thank and commend my fellow members on the committee for the work that they have done in relation to this bill. As we have heard, this bill seeks to address a number of issues. The bill seeks to enable state schools of distance education to deliver e-kindy to eligible children; to better allow for national professional standards for teachers; to address the issue of potential prosecution for failing to report sexual abuse by clarifying the requirements around reporting suspected sexual abuse; and, of course, it seeks to do away with the inefficient anniversary letters that are at present required to be sent year in, year out advising a student, as we have heard from the Leader of the Opposition, who has been permanently excluded from a school of their rights to seek a revocation of that decision.

On that last point, allow me to clarify that this amendment is not about failing to advise a student of their right to seek a revocation of an exclusion. It is important that a student be properly advised at the time of exclusion exactly what rights or opportunities are available to them. Again, it is vitally important that a student understands when they have breached or are perceived to have breached the acceptable behaviour or code of conduct that is the expectation of the place of learning for all students that that student be aware of the circumstances pertaining to that exclusion and/or their rights in response to that exclusion. Based on the submissions made to the committee, it is indeed my understanding that that, in fact, occurs—that students are advised and that correspondence is issued to the student and/or their parents or caregivers that assistance is available via regional caseworkers in order to find an alternative place or method to continue education for that student.

That is not what this bill is seeking to address. In that regard, this bill simply addresses the extremely inefficient requirement that a letter be sent year after year after year, often without any real certainty that the letter is even being received or remains appropriate. Like so many other amendments that this government is making, this amendment seeks to address the issue of wasteful and inefficient administrative processes.

On the topic of waste and inefficiency, it is also worth noting this bill's intention with regard to the adoption of national professional standards, which will also reduce red tape and create opportunities for teachers to utilise their skills and gain employment around the nation knowing that they have met national professional standards and consistent processes with regard to gaining teacher registration and accreditation of courses in all jurisdictions. As detailed in the explanatory notes to this bill, under the existing Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act it is the role of the Queensland College of Teachers to develop professional standards. Certainly, the QCT has developed a very high standard in the professional standards for Queensland teachers—the Queensland standards.

As the existing QCT act does not currently allow for the adoption of professional standards by other entities, including the national professional standards, it is necessary to make this amendment in order to allow for that national recognition that will allow for a more flexible workforce.

I would also talk today to the provision of e-kindy services to eligible children. It comes as no surprise that not all kids are able to head off to kindy just down the road. One of the things that we love about this country of ours, and indeed this great state of Queensland, is the vastness and variance in our beautiful land. However, it is that very reason—the vastness of this state—that often restricts families in regional areas from being able to give their children the same head start in life that may be available to children in our city regions. E-kindy offers an exciting new opportunity to give those children the ability to get that all-important head start in their education.

While it is not necessary for me to have to take advantage of e-kindy, kindy is no less relevant to my circumstances in life right now. As a father of two, with a daughter who is about to embark on her journey—she will be starting prep next year—the option for my wife and I to send our kids to kindy is something that is very important to us. Frankly, I could not imagine the disadvantage to my children, particularly my daughter at this very important juncture in her life, if I were to send her off to prep without any prior learning. I am very lucky. My wife and I consider ourselves very fortunate to have the option of sending our kids to kindy. Certainly there are those who do not have that option, whether that is due to distance, availability of the service or for any other reason. The provision of this online resource and service through schools of distance education gives parents the choice to take advantage of a pre-prep program that would not otherwise have been available.

This bill addresses a number of issues: red tape reductions and addressing unintended and untenable circumstances in the existing legislation. However, it is more than that. It is an investment in our children's future, it is an investment in our own future and it is on that basis that I commend the bill to the House.