




Speech By
Hon. John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Schools, Class Sizes

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (2.21 pm): Another day, another union scare campaign from the Queensland Teachers Union. President Kevin Bates was on the ABC this morning claiming that there are 500 fewer teachers in Queensland schools despite the fact that there are 9,000 more students. Wrong! The truth is that there are 270 more teachers this year than there were last year, and if Mr Bates spent more time fact checking and less time blindly regurgitating lines from Julia Gillard he would know that.

The government remains committed to allocating front-line staff in schools in response to increasing student enrolments whilst ensuring that the state's finances get back on track. As part of the budget process last year we made two key decisions: firstly, to move key teachers and resource teachers out of their assistance roles and put them back in front of classes; and, secondly, to remove the random arbitrary bonus allocation that was given to schools that meant they were always rounded up to the nearest full FTE number for their allocation.

What is important is how classrooms have been affected this year and how the unions and their mates opposite have deceived Queensland parents. These are the facts. The union has agreed that class size targets are 25 students per teacher in prep to year 3 and in years 11 and 12. Targets agreed to by the union are 28 students per teacher in years 4 to 10. This is in the enterprise bargaining agreement that the union agreed to last year. The union agrees that these are appropriate class sizes. Ninety-five per cent of classes met or were below these class size targets in 2012 and we are expecting similar figures this year. Not only that, class sizes are currently well under the targets. In years 4 to 7, the average class size in 2012 was 23.2 students. That is 4.8 students below the target for that age. In prep to year 3, the average class size in 2012 was 20.9. That is 4.1 students below target for that age.

Let me stress this point. The union agrees that the appropriate class size for a student in years 4 to 7 is 28. Our average class size is 23.2. The union agrees that the appropriate class size for a student in prep to year 3 is 25. Our average class size is 20.9. As a result of our two decisions, these average class sizes are expected to rise only fractionally and will still be well—well—below class size targets.

The QTU breeds organisers who are used to scaring people. They breed organisers well schooled in the lowest form of politics, and we see it again on this issue. For example, the Brisbane North QTU organiser, Fiona McNamara, is well known to the Premier as the person who oversaw Kate Jones's campaign in Ashgrove—and we know the calibre of politics on display by Labor there. She is now the candidate for Brisbane Central, where Kate Jones is her campaign director. She needs to choose if she wants to be a union representative or a member of parliament. I would encourage Mr Bates, who no doubt wants a seat himself, to make his points using facts rather than political propaganda.