




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 31 October 2013

**EDUCATION (STRENGTHENING DISCIPLINE IN STATE SCHOOLS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (12.08 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Education (Strengthening Discipline in State Schools) Amendment Bill 2013 and thank Minister Langbroek for bringing the legislation to the House. I recall with a certain level of anxiety the odd occasion when as a younger man I was called to the principal's office for punishment. It did not happen very often, but it did happen.

**Miss Barton:** Is this when you had your afro?

**Mr HART:** Let us not go there. Back in those days, as I am sure members can appreciate, the punishments were quite harsh. Those members who went to any of the Catholic private boys schools would understand what I am talking about. What really worried me when I was called to the principal's office was not so much the punishment that was to be dealt out in the principal's office, but what would happen when I got home. I knew that the principal would be passing on to my parents exactly what had happened at the school and that is where I would get the lecture, the speaking to, and where the punishment was dealt out. Sadly, I suspect that a lot of that is not happening nowadays. Much of that comes down to the parents and the way that they take care of their children. I really wish that some changes would be made there.

The Newman government is committed to delivering world-class services across all portfolios and that includes a quality education system with the best teachers, teaching in the best classrooms. School discipline is obviously an important part of driving high expectations and improving student outcomes. We all want to see those outcomes improved and the government has committed to that through its Great Teachers = Great Results action plan. The amendments proposed in this bill address the current legislative framework limitations and align them with reforms under the Great Teachers = Great Results strategy, which will strengthen the disciplinary powers of Queensland state school principals. This bill strengthens school discipline by giving principals the autonomy and the flexibility to make decisions about behavioural expectations in their schools and it acts in line with community expectations. This is really about community expectations. Our community wants to see schoolchildren behaving with respect for their elders, respect for their school teachers, respect for our policeman and respect for people in general. Over the past 20 or 30 years in this country that has fallen down and, as members of parliament, we need to get it back into place. We need to get back in place respect for the other human being. This sort of legislation starts to go down that path.

I commend the minister for bringing this legislation to the House. On numerous occasions I have spoken to the minister about disciplinary issues in my schools and frustrations that some of the school principals have brought to my attention. To his credit, the minister has listened and he has brought forward this legislation that fixes, in part, some of those issues. I will not go into specific details, as the minister will know of the sorts of issues that I am talking about.

Principals will now have the power to respond to student behaviour in a way that reflects community expectations and will not be beholden to red tape and bureaucracy when dealing with those common issues. Principals I have spoken to fully support the legislation and they are really looking forward to it passing through the House. Discipline improvement plans involve the school students and parents working together in a flexible way to outline clear expectations to improve student behaviour, which is common sense, and to outline the consequences when those expectations are not met. Let us tell those children exactly what will happen if they do not meet the expectations that we put on them. These plans will allow for quick and firm responses to problem behaviour and will bolster the grounds for suspension and exclusion. This legislation will restore balance and autonomy in our education system. I look forward to positive feedback from the six state schools in my electorate. With those few words, again, I thank the minister for bringing this legislation to the House and I fully support the bill.