




Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**

**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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**EDUCATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.29 pm): I rise in this chamber to speak on the Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2013. From the outset I too wish to thank the Minister for Education, Training and Employment for his efforts in bringing this important legislation to the House. Gilbert K Chesterton once stated—

Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.

Education is an issue that is close to my heart. My wife is a dedicated secondary schoolteacher, and I know from being a father of two boys that getting education right for families is a critical issue for the future of Queensland. Any of us who have had teachers for partners fully acknowledge the countless hours they put in, long after the school bell has rung. I take this opportunity to briefly salute all of the state's dedicated teachers.

The move to place year 7 into secondary schools will bring Queensland into line with many other states. I wish to commend the minister for overseeing the transition phase in its early stages. I have full confidence that this transition will be undertaken with the utmost care. Sadly, as has been demonstrated time and time again, this government has inherited a financial mess. Therefore, the minister has had to not only implement this change but also deal with the mismanagement of the previous administration, which left behind \$300 million of backlogged maintenance in local schools, including schools within the Chatsworth electorate—such as Whites Hill State College and Tingalpa State School. The former failed state Labor government announced in June 2011 that it would start the transition. However, like many policies the previous failed government announced, little planning ensued. As I said earlier, the minister has done an outstanding job, despite the obstacles left by Anna Bligh and her comrade, former education minister Cameron Dick.

This legislation will serve to ensure that non-state schools will not have to shoulder a heavy administrative burden to alter their accreditation. Throughout the past 18 months the Newman LNP government has sought to be the slasher of red tape and to ensure that relevant stakeholders, such as non-state schools, can progress forward with this important educational transition. I am extremely proud to be part of a reformist government that is committed to streamlining processes to get things done.

The Education Legislation Amendment Bill provides three different options. The first is to allow stand-alone secondary schools delivering years 8 to 12 to add year 7. The second is for combined primary and secondary schools—that is, prep to year 12—to provide year 7 as secondary education. The third is to allow stand-alone primary schools to keep year 7 but to teach under the secondary education framework. This amendment bill will enable non-state schools to simply notify the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board that they wish to take up either of the first two options. This will ensure that schools that are eligible for funding will automatically receive it in 2015. This process will ensure schools can easily meet the necessary criteria, thus removing the requirement to go through an application process to change the definition of their accreditation as well as rule out the need to check if they are eligible for government funding. This will enable the accreditation board's

process to be shortened significantly. However, to take advantage of this process non-state schools will have to ensure they deliver year 7 on or after 1 January and by no later than 1 March 2016.

This bill will make the necessary amendments to change the definition of secondary education to years 7 to 12. These changes will come into effect on 1 January 2015 and, as a consequence, the definition of primary school education will be prep to year 6. This amendment bill will also recognise prep as the first year of schooling. However, it will still not be compulsory for parents to enrol students in prep.

Education is such an important and vital area of public policy. Simply put, it determines the future of all Queenslanders. I am proud to represent the people of Chatsworth in a government which understands and recognises this fact. The left-wing neophytes across the chamber, along with their federal counterparts, will claim the opposite. However, the LNP government is making strides in improving the education system in Queensland.

The desperate Rudd government, which is tanking in the polls presently, is running scare campaigns that an elected LNP government will not care about education. I find that proposition both absurd and offensive. The Newman government has a plan, and this amendment bill is just a small part of the bigger plan that this government has for Queensland's overall education system. With programs ranging from Great Teachers = Great Results to the schools maintenance backlog scheme, I am confident that the LNP is getting our schools and the education system back on track, with full gusto. I thoroughly commend the bill to the House and again congratulate the minister on the sterling work he has undertaken over the last 18 months.