




Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill before the House. It was good to hear the minister say that this is an exciting bill, because it was a good bill to work on. I also congratulate the committee, because there was a lot of good banter and a lot of good talk.

An honourable member: A great committee.

Mr SAUNDERS: The Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee is a very good committee. We do have our testy moments but on the Grammar Schools Bill we did not have any testy moments. It was good to work with the opposition members. I also thank the secretariat and all the crew who did the work on this inquiry.

As a young man I remember the Rockhampton Grammar School and Rockhampton Girls Grammar School. As I am sure a lot of people in the House know, I am originally from Longreach so I spent a lot of time with friends and relatives who went to the grammar school in Rockhampton. What a great name it has. Grammar schools across the state have a fantastic name for their ability to educate people. That is something that will continue. I do not think this bill will affect that ability of the grammar schools in any way, shape or form.

In part 3, 'Staff and business of boards', clause 28 states—

- (1) A board—
- (a) must—
 - (i) employ a secretary ...; and
 - ...
 - (b) may employ staff as it considers appropriate to perform its functions or exercise its powers, including ... administrative officers, teachers and clerks.

The clause clarifies that staff are entitled to be paid the remuneration and allowances decided by the board and are employed under the Grammar Schools Act and not the Public Service Act 2008.

It is good to see that there have been changes with regard to the membership of the board and with regard to criminal history checks. Criminal history checks are very important when it comes to board members in the field of education. We want to make sure that the people on the board are the best of society. I am not saying that they are not, but it is good to see sections in the act that ensure we get the best people on grammar school boards.

Grammar schools do play an important part in the education of Queenslanders. As the chair of the committee said, it is about choice in education. That is something our government is doing quite well at the moment: giving people throughout Queensland choice in education. Education is provided not only through the public system—I am 100 per cent behind that system—but also through grammar schools, Catholic schools and Christian schools. We are giving the people of Queensland choice in

terms of where they educate their children. Choice is the major thing. I am someone who believes that we have to give people choice. There is no doubt about the importance of education. We know how important it will be, with so many existing jobs to be lost and new jobs to be created over the next 10 to 15 years. With coding and STEM coming into our system, we want to make sure that our children, whether they go to a grammar school or a public school, are educated to a level such that they will be able to get these jobs.

The minister and her department have done a fantastic job on this bill. They are really looking after the education of Queenslanders. They are making sure that Queenslanders will not be left behind and that we provide a high standard of education. The latest NAPLAN statistics show some really good results. The education minister, her department and the officials are working hard—

Ms Jones: And the wonderful teachers.

Mr SAUNDERS: And all of the teachers. That is very important. Last night I was talking to a few of my friends who went to Rockhampton Grammar School. I say to some people on this side of the House that, yes, I do have some friends. They were telling me that the years they attended the grammar school in Rockhampton were some of the best years of their life. They have all done very well, having received a great education.

Mrs Lauga: Hear, hear!

Mr SAUNDERS: I take the interjection from the member for Keppel.

Ms Jones: School captain she was.

Mr SAUNDERS: A former school captain of the grammar school. Look how far you can go: former school captain and now member for Keppel in the Queensland parliament. You cannot get any better than that! Grammar schools should be congratulated because they have done well to get the member for Keppel where she is today! This is a good bill and it is good to see choice in education. I commend the bill to the House.