




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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GRAMMAR SCHOOLS BILL

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to speak to the Grammar Schools Bill 2016. Firstly, I would like to thank the Minister for Education, the Hon. Kate Jones, for her work on this bill and for her work as education minister in general. She is doing an extraordinary job. I know that she is an inspiration to many of the principals in my electorate. I would also like to thank the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee for its work on this important bill.

This bill has been created to replace the current Grammar Schools Act 1975. A lot has changed in terms of society and attitudes since the original act and it is important that governments recognise the need for our schools to remain relevant and contemporary. I commend the Palaszczuk government for doing so by introducing this bill that is before us today.

This bill seeks to implement some important reforms whilst adhering to the current act's regulatory regime. In fact, one of the successes of grammar schools across Queensland is their adherence to tradition while maintaining a contemporary approach to the education of young Queenslanders.

Grammar school boards play an essential role in the operation and outcomes of the eight Queensland grammar schools. Grammar school boards are statutory bodies and as such are subject to annual audits by the Queensland Auditor-General. This bill removes some prescriptive requirements around financial management from the current Grammar Schools Act. Another important component of this bill is the removal of the power to establish any new grammar schools in Queensland. This fits with our ongoing dedication to providing secondary education through state schools, as well as our commitment to providing funding support to non-government schools. The Governor in Council currently appoints a seven-member board of trustees to grammar school boards. With this bill before us today, an additional two members may be appointed should a grammar school board request it. Additionally, a grammar school board may request ministerial appointments for less than four years which would allow boards to stagger their board appointments. In order to further modernise our grammar school boards, this bill will allow more scope for grammar school boards when it comes to meeting procedures and conduct.

In the period 1863 to 1892 Queensland grammar schools were established in order to provide a non-secular education for Queensland children. Grammar schools were established in partnership with government and the community with a view to supporting secondary school education in a cost-effective way. As we have heard several times today, there are eight grammar schools in Queensland and I am pleased and proud to have two outstanding examples of these schools in my electorate of Ipswich. In fact, one of these schools, Ipswich Grammar School, as the member for Pumicestone has said, was the very first grammar school to be established in Queensland. With more than 1,000 students enrolled today, I think it is safe to say that the school has gone ahead in leaps and bounds from the 16 students in attendance at its opening in 1863.

Grammar schools have become widely recognised as institutions of excellence in education. I can certainly attest to this in the case of the Ipswich Grammar School and the Ipswich Girls Grammar School. As I have already stated, Ipswich Grammar School was the first grammar school to be established in Queensland in 1863, three years after the initial Grammar Schools Act was established. The Ipswich community raised the initial funds to partner with the Queensland government in establishing the school that remains in place in Woodend to this day. The current principal, Mr Richard Morrison, is the 16th principal of Ipswich Grammar School and is well and truly making his mark at the school after less than a year in the job. My son attended Ipswich Grammar School from 1999 to 2004. The principal in charge when he started, Igor Lapa, was succeeded by Denis Frederiksen in 2001. Mr Frederiksen served as principal until 2010. We first heard of Mr Frederiksen's appointment in the *Queensland Times* in late 2000 and after I read it I reminisced to my son that I had a principal called Denis Frederiksen and wondered if perhaps it was the same person. In the inimitable style of 14-year-olds all over the world when talking to their parents, my son looked at me and responded, 'Don't be silly, Mum, he'd be dead by now.' I did share this anecdote with Mr Frederiksen some time later—who, by the way, was the one and same Mr Frederiksen who taught me in grade 9 in Mackay State High School and is very much alive—and we were able to laugh about it despite our advanced years.

Ipswich Girls Grammar School opened on 10 March 1892. The founding principal of Ipswich Girls Grammar School was a woman called Fanny Hunt, who was the first woman to graduate in science from Sydney University. There were 31 students enrolled at the opening and that has now grown to around 900 students today. My daughter attended Ipswich Girls Grammar School from 1996 to 2001 and now has a PhD and is a Doctor of Medicine. Anecdotally, the first ever student to enrol at Ipswich Girls Grammar School, Mrs Eleanor Greenham, went on to become the first Queensland-born woman to earn a degree in medicine.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend Dr Peter Britton, the 11th and current principal of Ipswich Girls Grammar School, who is well respected in our community and is doing an excellent job guiding the school into the future. Ipswich Girls Grammar School, including Ipswich Junior Grammar School, has a very strong focus on excellence and nurturing every young woman, girl and boy to become confident, well educated and prepared for higher learning, leadership and life. Nurturing is the word I think of when I think about the benefits that my daughter received at that school. In fact, there are two teachers who taught her when she was at that school, Elizabeth Kingston, who was her art teacher, and Maria Stevenson, who was her science teacher, were wonderful role models to my daughter and many of her friends at that school. I know that they are still thought about to this day. There is no doubt that the school played a significant role in the outcomes for my own daughter. It has also been pivotal in the outcomes and the education of thousands of significant and inspirational women who have pursued careers in health, law, engineering, information technology, politics and other challenging careers. Ipswich Girls Grammar School identified the many benefits of a co-educational experience in the formative years so in the 1990s the school expanded to include young boys, with Junior Grammar now providing full co-education from kindergarten to year 6.

Our grammar schools are a very good example of how productive and beneficial community-government partnerships can be. As I have already said, Queensland has eight grammar schools and they are all highly regarded. The minister is correct, though, to disallow any future grammar schools to be established in Queensland. Secondary education is now supported differently in this state and I think that this approach is the correct one. By supporting the establishment of state schools and regulating the operation of non-state schools, in addition to providing grant funding to eligible non-state schools, this government is providing a more contemporary approach to secondary education. Under the Grammar Schools Act, no non-grammar school is allowed to operate under a name that includes the word 'grammar' or to in any way imply that it is a grammar school. There are two exceptions to that: Anglican Church Grammar School and Sunshine Coast Grammar School. No offences apply to these schools because they were already operating when the offences were introduced. Once again, I am very pleased to support the Grammar Schools Bill 2016 and I commend it to the House.