




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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### **EDUCATION (ACCREDITATION OF NON-STATE SCHOOLS) BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.51 pm): It is with great pleasure that I make a short contribution on the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill 2017. Mr Deputy Speaker Stewart, as a teacher yourself, including teaching at the Springsure State School back in the mid-eighties, you understand that small schools in the electorate of Gregory are very important and are just as important as those schools anywhere else across this state. I was certainly glad to read that recommendation 2 of the committee states—

The committee recommends that clause 7 of the Bill be amended to ensure that a governing body of multiple schools is not prevented from using some income to support the operation of some or all of its schools.

The government accepts this recommendation. This is important, especially to schools in Western Queensland where we have non-government schools which do not have a lot of money going through them. They are not there to make a profit. They are not schools with vast amounts of ovals, infrastructure, gyms and swimming pools. They are schools mainly contributed by the Catholic Education Diocese of Rockhampton. They are the Catholic schools in Gregory. They do it very tough sometimes, especially when we are going through a drought, and they need to be able to continue to get those fees in to continue the schools.

If they do make a profit, they spend that money directly on the school, but they still rely heavily on the P&Cs, on fundraising and on events that are held, such as the Marist racing day which is a very popular event in Emerald at the Marist College. As a member, I represent 54 non-government schools and government schools, and I think it is important that we continue to see an investment in education in those Western Queensland and regional schools. Those students are tomorrow's doctors, tomorrow's accountants, tomorrow's leaders. Amongst them is probably someone who will sit in this chamber as the member for Gregory one day and will play a significant role in advocating not only for education but also for the continued investment in upgrading our education facilities in the seat of Gregory.

I would also like to pay tribute to the non-government schools in the electorate of Gregory. Catholic education in the diocese of Rockhampton is committed to high-quality teaching and learnings for 16,200 students enrolled in kindergartens, Catholic primary schools and colleges from Bundaberg to Mackay and west to Longreach. There are eight kindergartens, 31 primary schools and eight colleges founded on that strong Catholic ethos in all aspects of life in our educational communities. They play a significant role, and I am a product of the Catholic system in Western Queensland at St Patrick's. I was an average student, being more interested in sport and playing rugby league and cricket. Catholic education in Western Queensland has played a significant role in my life, and it continues to play a significant role in my children's life, with my two oldest daughters going to Marist College and my youngest daughter, Poppy, still going to St Patrick's in Emerald, the school that I went to. I am very excited to see them continue there.

I pay tribute to those non-state schools in my electorate. I pay tribute to all of the staff at Marist College, where my other two daughters, Lucy and Ellie, attend. Principal Mark Green does a fantastic job there. The Marist College is a significant educational facility in Emerald and the Central Highlands.

It is a significant contributor to the community and in leadership. Marist College won the Ballymore Cup last year out of all non-state schools. They came down here in 2016 and had a surprise win to win the Ballymore Cup, which is the premier rugby event for schools such as Marist College playing against all other non-state schools in Queensland.

I cannot forget the newest school in Emerald, St Brigid's, and their principal, Mick Roach. Mick Roach is a fantastic bloke. He does a bit of rugby league commentating. He has done a great job to make sure that St Brigid's continues to grow and grow. In fact, they are expanding with new classrooms this year and they expanded last year. The design principle around that is fantastic, where they are creating pods as infrastructure and building infrastructure.

I cannot forget St Patrick's where I went and my children went. I need to pay tribute to a very significant person there, principal Max Martin. He has dedicated 17 years to St Patrick's and he is leaving at the end of the year and heading to the member for Keppel's electorate and going to Sacred Heart as the new principal. Max Martin has been a stalwart of not only the faith but also the education in that school and he will be sorely missed. There is not much that Max has not done for the Central Highlands. He started his career in Western Queensland in Longreach. He will be sorely missed at St Patrick's. To have a principal at one school for 17 years and to play a significant role in not only the education but also the community should be admired, and he certainly needs all of the accolades we can give him. He is a tremendous bloke. He is a bit grumpy on the field when we play touch football together. He gets that headmaster attitude and likes to direct me in different ways and tell me to pick up my socks, to keep going and to take the ball up but he is a great bloke.

There is another non-state school in Emerald which is doing a fantastic job, the Emerald Christian College, with principal Graeme Johnston and his staff. The Emerald Christian College spoke to the shadow cabinet and the LNP state executive when they came out. The college played a significant role in making sure the shadow cabinet knew what was going on with education. It was also an opportunity for the shadow cabinet ministers to go to the college's first fair, which they held when we had our shadow cabinet up there. It is an exciting school and Graeme does a great job.

In Clermont, we cannot forget St Joseph's, and their principal, Matthew Anderson, does a great job. In Springsure, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School is a great Catholic school and the principal, Duane Wann, does a great job. In Longreach, there is a fantastic school called Our Lady's Catholic Primary School with principal Tanya Lambley. That school is getting a massive renovation. I thank the Rockhampton diocese for investing in Our Lady's Catholic Primary School. That process will start in the next couple of weeks and there will be a complete renovation of the whole school with new classrooms. That is something to be excited about, and I am looking forward to local builders being involved in that.

There is a school that the former member for Gregory went to in the town of Quilpie. It is a great school and they have been very, very active in the town. I speak of St Finbarr's and their principal, Genny McNair. Vaughan Johnson was one of the star students to come out of St Finbarr's. He certainly learnt all of his good manners from St Finbarr's and the sisters there. What a good product we found from St Finbarr's in Vaughan Johnson.

It would be remiss of me not to mention some great state schools. All the state schools in Gregory are fantastic. I would like to point out to the minister that the Longreach State High School has been recognised for its hospitality training with the big red truck. It is a fantastic program for kids going into hospitality, especially considering the outback tourism. I call on the government to keep funding it. They also need assistance with the insurance and registration of the truck. It is a semitrailer and is expensive to register. It is certainly worth doing.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge a school that played a major role in my life as a young man and that is Toowoomba Grammar School. I congratulate headmaster Peter Hauser and Scott Campbell, who heads up the junior school. When I was there the principal was William Dent, who was a well-recognised principal at Toowoomba Grammar School and played a significant role in my life as did Ron Bourne, the deputy headmaster. Hugh Rose was the headmaster after I left. He continues to play a role as chairman of the Queensland Agricultural Training Colleges such as Emerald Agricultural College and Longreach Pastoral College.

Finally, I would like to give a shout out to the ICPA. I thank Tracy Davis, our shadow minister, who attended the Alpha conference with Verity Barton. They were able to sit down with these people and talk about higher education needs. A lot of these parents have students at non-state schools. The ICPA are a tremendous advocate group for education right across rural and remote Queensland. We need to continue to listen to them and continue to invest in education in western and regional Queensland. I thank the committee and the government with regard to the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill 2017.