




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Record of Proceedings, 10 August 2017

EDUCATION (ACCREDITATION OF NON-STATE SCHOOLS) BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (12.14 pm): I, too, rise to make a contribution to the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Bill 2017. As always, firstly, I would like to thank my fellow committee members—the committee chair, the deputy chair, the member for Maryborough, the member for Hervey Bay and the member for Pumicestone. I also thank the secretariat staff for helping us to consider this bill. As the member for Broadwater touched on, I would like to thank all those who participated in the public hearing—people like Mr Robertson from Independent Schools Queensland and Dr Lee-Anne Perry AM from the Catholic Education Commission. It was great to have them come along and give their opinions about this bill, which, as other members have highlighted, will streamline the process when it comes to seeking government funding for these important schools.

I think it is fitting for me to mention my local private schools, my local independent schools and one of my local Catholic schools. They do such a fantastic job. I have quite a few in my area—Rivermount College, St Stephen's College, Coomera Anglican College and Assisi Catholic College. They are four very, very good—

Miss Barton: How did Michael Crandon let you get a school named 'Coomera' in your electorate?

Mr BOOTHMAN: With the redistribution, the member for Coomera will take the majority of these independent schools off me. These schools have done an absolutely fantastic job over the years. The principal of Rivermount College is an exemplary individual who is very passionate about increasing the education outcomes for his students.

I have said on many occasions that I would love to see a few more private schools pop up in the area simply because of the massive development we have on the northern Gold Coast. As the member for Coomera and I have said in this chamber many times, we have experienced a 20 per cent population growth in the Pimpama region. Having more independent schools to share the burden of this population and having legislation to make it easier for them to create new campuses would go a long way to catering for this massive population growth. I note that in the latest NAPLAN results my local schools are certainly up there near the top. They are doing a fantastic job and they should be very proud of what they have achieved.

The review into the non-state school sector commenced back in 2014 under the previous LNP government. This legislation has taken a little time to make it to parliament. Going by what the independent schools and the Catholic schools were saying, they do appreciate what has transpired with this legislation. The need to modernise and streamline non-state school accreditation is long overdue. The bill replaces the current act, while continuing the majority of the current arrangements for accreditation of non-state schools. Under the current act, recommendations about the school's eligibility for government funding are made by the board, then proceed to the eligibility committee and then to the

minister. This includes deciding whether a school will be operated on a not-for-profit basis, whether the governing body deals with any for-profit organisations on an arms-length basis and whether there are any potential conflicts of interest. This bill simplifies this process while still making sure that schools are truly acting as not-for-profit entities.

One issue picked up in the committee hearings which members and the minister have highlighted is clause 7 and the impact on schools with one or more campuses that wish to expand to another campus. That is something I have mentioned to one of my local schools. I would like to see an expansion in the Albert or Coomera region because, as I said, we have a massive and growing population. Our local private schools are pretty much at capacity. I have been pushing to help these schools financially to expand to another campus in another area.

The committee examined the clauses of the bill and the vast majority of the process is exactly the same except for one major aspect, and that is the eligibility committee. Clauses 78 to 85 govern whether the school is suitable to receive government funding if proven it has followed the eligibility criteria.

To wrap up, this has been a while in the making. When I spoke to my local schools, their boards and committees about it, it is something they were very interested in. It is important that we streamline these processes to make it easier for schools—these not-for-profit organisations—to expand and build additional schools on the northern Gold Coast.