




Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR MCCONNELL**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

### **EDUCATION (OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (6.07 pm), in reply: After that wounding I really do not know how I am going to cope! Honestly, it was like a wet lettuce leaf.

I thank all honourable members for their contribution to this debate on the Education (Overseas Students) Bill 2018. The bill seeks to replace the Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996 with a new act that will regulate providers of courses to overseas students and providers of international student exchange programs. I have taken on board a lot of what was said. It is a really important program. This is fantastic for the state. It is great for the students who come here and it is great for our students who go overseas. In Queensland we have over a hundred non-state schools and 150 state schools that provide education to overseas students. In the 2016-17 financial year international education provided a significant contribution to the Queensland economy and we have a policy that we want to grow that economic contribution.

In addition, in 2017, 144 international students and 162 Queensland students participated in student exchange programs. This new regulatory framework established by this bill better reflects Queensland's role and responsibilities under the national framework for the regulation of providers of education to overseas students and provides the department with appropriate regulatory and oversight powers to safeguard the welfare of students participating in international student exchange programs.

The bill also supports the implementation of the very important new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems, which the Palaszczuk government committed to introduce for students entering year 11 in 2019. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the bill also amends the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act to ensure that non-exempt shops may continue to trade on the Easter Saturday public holiday in those regional areas without seven-day trading. This amendment will ensure that businesses and consumers in the affected regional towns have early notice and the assurance that existing Easter Saturday trading arrangements will remain in place.

I will now address some of the matters raised by honourable members during the course of the debate. I will begin with the title of the bill and the concerns of the member for Kawana and others that it did not incorporate 'and other amendments'. I am sure the opposition well knows that the Department of Education receives advice from the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel with regard to the naming of the bill. The member for Kawana should be aware that references to other legislation amended by the bill is referred to in the long title of the bill but not in the short title of the bill.

The fact that the member for Kawana raised this concern is not surprising, coming from a former attorney-general who brought legislation to this House that was unconstitutional. If you talk about people in glass houses, you would swear that the member for Kawana has never made an error. Let me refresh his memory. Let me cast his mind back to 4 June 2014 when the former member for Callide, the then

deputy premier, had to move an amendment outside the long title of his Sustainable Planning (Infrastructure Charges) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to fix the member for Kawana's mistakes—the unconstitutional parts that were in the bill.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think it was you, Mr Deputy Speaker Robinson, who ruled against the member for Beaudesert talking about vegetation management during his contribution, and I think the minister is now diverting outside the long title and the short title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson):** Yes, the minister will return to the bill. I did allow a little latitude on the issue of the long title of the bill only because it had come up in some of the speeches. If the minister could return to the bill, that would help.

**Ms GRACE:** When you talk about someone with a glass jaw, let me tell you. Then he bungled the hold harmless clause and moved the wrong amendment in that particular legislation. *Hansard* will show that he moved a massive 169 amendments during the consideration in detail stage to the two industrial relations bills. They had a majority in this House of 66 seats and he could not even get it right with that many seats. In relation to people in glass houses, I think the member for Kawana should probably keep quiet and accept it. When it comes to the alternative universe he resides in, he says as if it is fact that somehow in the trading hours legislation we had not planned for a systemic introduction of the bills. The fact is that it was streamlined. It was all done and it was all introduced according to our time frames, but it does not change the way the member for Kawana keeps talking about it.

I will now move to the contribution of the member for Currumbin, who at least raised a pertinent matter concerning this bill. I thank the member for Currumbin for her concern about the QCAA's capacity to purchase and revise assessments for use as external assessments. I can assure the member that this was addressed in committee. The response to this matter is on the public record. The Department of Education provided clear written advice to the former committee outlining that this is similar to existing syllabus functions of the QCAA.

The new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems are, without doubt, reforms involving complex interrelated systems that will impact over 50,000 year 12 students and their families each year. This government is a responsive government and a responsible government. We have listened to the QCAA's recommendation that schools and teachers be provided with more time to ensure they are fully prepared for the new arrangements. This is not a simple transition. The Palaszczuk government listened to the stakeholders across schools in state and non-state school sectors and the tertiary education sector, which uniformly—let me repeat that for those opposite—which uniformly supported the revised time frame. This is the stark contrast between the Palaszczuk government and those opposite. We listen, act responsibly and take matters seriously.

Another stark contrast is all of the self-congratulating coming from those opposite throughout today about their involvement with the review of the senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems. This government is focused on action and being responsive to the needs of Queensland, not just talk and patting each other on the back. Let us be clear about this: the opposition did not invest one dollar in the implementation of the new systems. The Palaszczuk government has invested \$72.9 million over five years in progressing the introduction of the new systems. This includes \$27.5 million in 2017-18 which provides funding to the QCAA and QTAC to prepare for implementation in 2019. There is an enormous amount of work required for this transition, and this funding is there to ensure—as the member for Townsville and the member for Mansfield, as former principals, would rightly know—that the training, the syllabus and the curriculum is all in place so that students can smoothly transition to this new system.

Under this government the following has been done to progress the new systems: a new SATE was guided by the ministerial Senior Secondary Assessment Taskforce. This task force was informed by representation from parent groups, secondary principals' associations, teachers' unions and tertiary institutions. The QCAA is redeveloping senior syllabuses, including 46 general and 25 applied subjects. During 2016 and 2017 more than 40,000 year 11 students in approximately 350 state and non-state schools participated in external assessment trials. We had to implement a trial system to be sure that this goes smoothly for those students. In 2017 joint information sessions were held by the QCAA and QTAC. In July 2017 the QCAA commenced a program of fully funded workshops for teachers on planning, teaching and assessment using the redeveloped general syllabus.

With all of this work being done, is it any surprise that the QCAA and all of the stakeholders have supported a delay in the implementation of the new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems? It is only a matter of common sense from the responsive, serious, getting-on-with-business government that the Palaszczuk government represents. People would only be surprised if they were out of touch

and so far removed from the real needs of education in Queensland—like the opposition is—that they raised the concerns they did time and time again during this debate. This is a government that listens to Queenslanders and acts and implements what we said we were going to implement along lines that ensure a smooth transition. I again thank all those involved with the development of this bill. I thank the committee for its report. I am very pleased there is bipartisan support for this bill. I commend the bill to the House.