




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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EDUCATION (OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education (Overseas Students) Bill 2018. This bill modernises the regulation of providers of courses to overseas students, establishes a new legislative regime for regulating providers of international student exchange programs and supports the implementation of the new senior assessment and tertiary entrance system for Queensland. I recommend this bill be supported today. There are two areas of the bill that I would like to focus on. One of them sets out to modernise the regulation of providers of courses to overseas students and the other establishes a new legislative regime for regulating providers of international student exchange programs.

The delivery of education to overseas students in Australia is a powerful driver of our economy. International education is Australia's third largest export behind iron ore and coal. In the 2016-17 financial year, international education delivered over \$4 billion to the Queensland economy. We have seen the massive growth of overseas students studying at our universities over the last 10 to 20 years, and now we are seeing more and more overseas students coming to Australia to study at our high schools.

In Queensland, over 85,000 international students from 160 countries come here to study at our universities, training colleges and schools. With this number of international students we need to make sure that Queensland has learning providers that can deliver quality education and a safe learning environment where students can reach their academic potential. One hundred and fifty state high schools across Queensland now offer enrolments to international students along with over 100 non-state schools.

International students are not only choosing to study in the metropolitan Brisbane area but also opting to study and experience student life, as we have heard from our regional members, in Queensland regional and country areas. In my electorate of Ipswich international students are coming to study in Ipswich at the Ipswich Grammar School and Ipswich Girls' Grammar School. Students are coming from a number of countries such as China, India, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Vietnam. They are choosing Ipswich because it is in a unique position where it can offer students an experience of living in a regional area while also being in fairly close proximity to Brisbane. When I met with principals Richard Morrison from Ipswich Grammar School and Dr Peter Britton from Ipswich Girls' Grammar School, they talked about the connections those children are bringing to their schools and how it is enriching the cultural life of the school as well as the academic life of the school.

Studying outside of Brisbane is a great opportunity for international students to experience not only a quality education in regional Queensland schools but also life in regional and country towns. They are making lifelong friendships with local students and families and forging new networks that will help them in their journey after high school.

The Education (Overseas Students) Act 1996 commenced on 7 December 1998 and regulated providers of courses to overseas students. Since its enactment though there has been significant change in the regulation of providers of courses to international students, in particular with the establishment of the national framework under the Commonwealth Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000.

The Commonwealth act requires providers of education to overseas students to be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students, commonly referred to as CRICOS. Registered CRICOS providers must have met, and continue to meet, the requirements prescribed in the Commonwealth act and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students. Queensland's role under the national framework involves approving school providers as the first step of CRICOS registration and undertaking monitoring and enforcement activities. The current Queensland act does not adequately reflect the state's role in the national framework or provide the Department of Education with sufficient powers to monitor compliance with the Commonwealth act and national code.

In addition, the Queensland act duplicates the CRICOS registration requirements by requiring Queensland based providers to also be registered on a separate state based register. This bill therefore provides a timely and important regulatory reform for this sector by introducing a new legislative scheme that better reflects Queensland's role and responsibilities under the national framework and reduces unnecessary duplication. It will also improve the department's capacity to monitor compliance by providing for the appointment of authorised persons with appropriate investigatory powers, coupled with the usual safeguards on the exercise of those powers.

The other component of the bill I would like to touch on briefly concerns the new legislative regime for regulating providers of international student exchange programs. International student exchange programs are a wonderful opportunity for Queensland students to experience life in a different country, develop foreign language skills, build up valuable knowledge of unique cultures and build independence and resilience.

In 2017, 144 international students and 162 Queensland students participated in international secondary student exchange programs. Under similar arrangements Australian students have the opportunity to attend a secondary school in another country. No tuition fees are paid by students participating in these student exchange programs because reciprocity of exchange is accepted in lieu of payment of the fees. This arrangement is enormously beneficial to students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who may otherwise not have the financial means to travel overseas. I commend this bill to the House.