




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

EDUCATION (OVERSEAS STUDENTS) BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (4.02 pm): The Education (Overseas Students) Bill 2018 is a sensible bill that will create a new regime for the regulation of providers of courses for overseas students and international student exchange programs. It is important to regulate the quality of courses taught and to protect students. In overseas countries, parents view Australia as a safe place for their children to travel to in order to gain a high-quality educational experience.

There are flow-on effects for our economy. Every student who has a favourable experience in our Queensland schools is more likely to return as a tourist with their families or as a university student. In 2017, I believe 144 international students and 162 Queensland students participated in international secondary student exchange programs. International students participating in international secondary student exchange programs travel to Australia on a student visa and attend a secondary school for a period of up to 12 months.

Under similar arrangements, Australian students have the opportunity to attend a secondary school in another country. No tuition fees are paid by the student participating in those student exchange programs because reciprocal exchange is accepted in lieu of the payment of fees. Most students participating in the exchange programs are under the age of 18 years and travel without a parent or guardian. Mackay has a sister city relationship with Matsuura in Japan. Every year, Mackay students travel to Japan and Japanese students come to Mackay. The students who participate in the program find it to be invaluable for their own personal growth and for their cultural development.

Currently, in Queensland the providers of international student exchanges are regulated under an administrative scheme that applies nationally consistent guidelines. This bill introduces a statutory regime for the regulation of the providers of student exchange programs. The legislative scheme reflects the requirements and obligations imposed on providers under the existing administrative regime. Importantly, the scheme provides the department with appropriate regulatory oversight powers to safeguard the welfare of international exchange students coming to Queensland to study. The new legislative regime does not apply for short-term cultural exchanges that occur under visitor visa arrangements.

The bill will also provide the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority with functions to administer new senior assessment and tertiary entrance systems, commencing for students entering year 11 in 2019. In 2018, our first full-time prep students entered year 11. I know that their parents were concerned that once again those students were to be the guinea pigs for change. They pushed back on this as they did not want their students to be the first to take on the new system. Teachers in my electorate to whom I spoke told me that they felt those students were not ready for the changes so were really pleased that we took the sensible approach of pushing the changes back to 2019.

The overhaul of the new assessment and tertiary entrance systems will combine school based assessment, developed and marked by classroom teachers, with external assessment set and marked by the QCCA. Previously there were no external exams to compare students. There was only a system of moderation between local schools. The new ranking will replace the current overall position or OP score with an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank or ATAR score.

The bill will also amend the Trading (Allowable Hours) Act. The amendment will reverse the unintended consequences that non-exempt shops in areas without seven-day trading would not be able to trade on Easter Sunday and other public holidays over the Easter break. This is a sensible bill and I commend it to the House.