




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 30 April 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (11.38 am): I rise to speak to the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. Today I will very proudly talk about teachers. I think we should celebrate, admire and be grateful for the dedication of teachers to the future of our children. I have seen firsthand the sheer hard work, determination, dedication and passion that goes into teachers' work. My mum has been a state school teacher for over 25 years. Every day she would get to work early and stay late. She would work on weekends and public holidays. Recently when she took long service leave she spent each day marking instead of relaxing. I said, 'Mum, that's really not what long service leave is for,' but she is so dedicated to her job. I am so incredibly proud that she has instilled in me a belief in the importance of a good quality education no matter where in Queensland people live.

I was also fortunate recently to attend the professional development day for teachers at Parkhurst State School. The teachers could not help but teach me—

Mr Pegg: My brother attended there.

Mrs LAUGA: I take that interjection. The teachers could not help but teach me that day about reading assessment. It was great. I loved learning about the way in which they teach reading and about the work they do.

It is not easy to teach. Teachers have so much patience and creativity. They are so incredibly invested in getting the best outcomes for their students. The teachers I meet with and speak to seem to be always thinking about creative and innovative ways to teach their students and about how to engage the different learning styles of students.

I was also incredibly impressed when I visited Parkhurst State School on the first day of school this year. I got to see two prep teachers in action on the first day of school. In fact, for one of the teachers it was the first day of her career. I am sure the first day of school was incredibly nerve wracking for the prep students, this teacher and the parents. The new prep teacher sailed through with flying colours.

That day I was also able to witness another prep classroom with a teacher who had years and years and years of experience who probably would qualify for the HAT or LT qualification, and she also sailed through with flying colours. It was so amazing to see the experience of that teacher at work and the way that both teachers had put so much effort and planning into setting up that day to make it as easy as possible for those two prep classes.

We know that an excellent teacher with strong professional skills, motivation and commitment can account for up to a 30 per cent difference in the achievement between students. Given the significant difference that teachers can make to a student's performance, it is also important therefore to attract the best talent to teaching. Teachers need meaningful career pathways that cultivate and recognise expertise through appropriate remuneration and role allocation. This is how the HAT and LT roles will support our experienced and best teachers. It will give a real pathway that cultivates and recognises expertise.

To create a world-class teaching workforce, teaching needs to be an appealing and valued profession. Teachers must be valued for the critical role that they play in educating our young Australians. We are cultivating a profession of expert educators by creating meaningful career pathways with the HAT and LT classification by strongly valuing their expertise and impact. Improving our education system largely depends on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers and that existing experienced teachers feel that they are valued. Teaching must be a high status profession of expert educators. We know, though, that between 30 per cent and 50 per cent of Australian teachers leave the profession within the first five years, and feeling undervalued is one of the primary reasons for leaving the profession. Last year I held a drinks afternoon for World Teachers Day for teachers in my electorate. After hosting them on a Friday afternoon for a few drinks, they were so grateful to feel valued by their local member and to be invited along to celebrate with a few drinks for World Teachers Day. That just goes to show how much those teachers really enjoyed the opportunity to feel valued.

Teachers are subject to so many negative perceptions which impact not only how others see them but also how they see themselves. Their work is often undervalued and the perception that teachers are overworked and underpaid serves as a career disincentive for some. Deeper change targeting perceptions and mindsets about the profession and education is needed, so I am calling on parents and students everywhere to love their teachers. Celebrate your teachers. Appreciate them. Work with your teacher or your child's teacher. Get involved in your child's learning. Get involved in your child's school. The teachers who are engaged with your children are there for one reason, and that is to give them a better opportunity and a better start to life. Parents and students need to work together with teachers and value them more because teachers need a little bit more support from the community to help them feel that they are a valued occupation and a valued part of our community. This bill is a good bill. It is a good bill that will help teachers. It will provide support to teachers and provide a great career pathway for teachers. This is something that we have been talking about and that we as a government have committed to. I commend the bill to the House.