




Speech By  
**Bruce Saunders**

**MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

### **EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.51 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. I thank the committee chair, deputy chair and members from the LNP, Labor and the crossbench. This is a great bill. I congratulate the minister for bringing it forward to the House. The explanatory notes state—

The policy and objectives of the Bill are to:

- create a certification process in Queensland, consistent with a national framework, that recognises high performing teachers and encourages them to continue their role as a classroom teacher;
- enable the Queensland College of Teachers (the College) to perform the role of certifying authority for the certification of highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers; and
- provide for an effective, transparent certification process, with decisions subject to appropriate review.

Ensuring high teaching standards is a priority for the Queensland Government. Retaining quality teachers in the classroom is essential to ensuring an effective education system. It is therefore important to develop a framework to identify high performing teachers and give them the appropriate career opportunities without leaving the classroom.

A lot of my personal friends are teachers. A lot of those teachers do not want to work in the regional office or become principals. They are dedicated teachers; that is what they do. When you get to know teachers as well as I have, you realise that they are a different breed of people. They are caring people. A few weeks ago I was talking to one of my great friends about this bill in the main street of Maryborough. She said that one of the highlights of being a teacher is when she runs into former students in the street and they tell her how good they are going: 'I am doing this and doing that and moving forward.' It is important to have teachers like that and remunerate them to stay in the classroom.

As we know, our economy is changing. We are experiencing digital disruption, and we need high-quality teachers in the classroom. We do not want them sitting in offices or doing other things. We need them to be getting our students ready for their careers.

At one of our committee hearings I asked the education department about rural and country schools. Coming from the regions, I like to ensure consistent education standards across the state. I know that the member for Gregory would agree that kids from Longreach or Barcaldine should have the same opportunities that children on the coast have—children in Rockhampton, in Maryborough or on the Sunshine Coast. It is very important that students from the regional and country areas get the same education as their urban counterparts.

It was pleasing to hear from the department that this process will apply throughout Queensland—to regional Queensland and country schools. This will enable teachers to stay in these communities. We want children in these regional areas and country towns to be able to go on to university or TAFE if they want to, so that they have better job prospects. We cannot do that if we do not have good quality teachers. This bill ensures that good quality teachers stay in the classroom and do what they are trained to do. I congratulate the minister, because this is all about making sure our children are educated. That is what we on this side of the House do. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that believes wholly and solely in education.

I will talk about my electorate for a moment. It is important to have highly skilled teachers. In low socio-economic areas, education makes a difference. It is education that will lift my area up. These teachers are so important to areas like mine. Some of my schools do it tough. Having teachers in these schools will give every student in the Maryborough electorate the opportunity to further their education.

Highly skilled teachers in classrooms need to be backed up by appropriate facilities—buildings and so on. Before last year's budget I spoke extensively to the minister about some of the small schools in my electorate and how their classrooms needed to be upgraded. If we are to attract high-quality teachers to these schools, we need to give them good classrooms and other resources. The schools at Brooweena, Tiaro, Mungar and Howard have all had upgrades. That will help retain existing teachers and attract good teachers to these schools. These schools are not big, but their children deserve the same opportunity and the same standard of education that children in bigger schools in the Maryborough electorate have—Torbanlea State School, Sunbury State School or Maryborough Central State School. Having adequate facilities will keep these teachers at the schools.

**Mr Perrett:** Air conditioning, too.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take that interjection from the member for Gympie. The member for Currumbin let the cat out of the bag in relation to the air-conditioning of schools. She said it is over two parliamentary terms.

**Mr MILLAR:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance to the long title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): I will take some advice.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members, I am taking some advice. That is not an opportunity to debate across the chamber. Member for Maryborough, even though you took the interjection, the interjection in and of itself is irrelevant to the debate so I will bring you back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will be guided by your advice.

We hear stories about the unions and the member for Kawana spoke about the unions. I can honestly say that I have had great discussions about this bill with the QTU and the independent teachers union. They are very supportive of what the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing for education across this state. I commend this bill to the House.