




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 12 February 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. G GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.03 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019 [115](#).

Tabled paper: Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019, explanatory notes [116](#).

Today I am pleased to introduce the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019 into the House. We know that education has the power to transform lives. That is why in 2015 the Palaszczuk government made a commitment to transform and modernise the teaching profession under the Letting Teachers Teach initiative. This commitment was to establish two new classifications called highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher, aligned to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, the professional standards.

The introduction of this bill today is another example of this government delivering on its commitments. The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering a world-class education for all Queensland children. We know that Queensland teachers are empowering minds, creating opportunities and supporting student development each and every day. Excellent teachers who feel valued and motivated are essential to our world-class education system in Queensland. To retain our excellent teachers, it is crucial there is an effective and efficient framework that identifies expert teachers and gives them the appropriate career opportunities without them having to leave the classroom.

This bill is not just about teachers; it also goes to the heart of maintaining a high standard of education in this state. The Palaszczuk government is focused on providing all Queensland children with a great start. We know that the education system we have today will shape the future of our state.

The Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019 amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 to create a nationally recognised certification framework for Queensland that recognises high-quality teachers and encourages them to continue their role in the classroom as a teacher; enable the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of a certifying authority within the framework for the certification of highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers; and provide for an effective, transparent certification process with decisions subject to appropriate review.

Until recently, the structure of the teaching profession has often required teachers to choose between staying in the classroom or moving into administrative and school leader positions to further their careers. While we are happy when excellent teachers become excellent principals and school leaders, it should not be their only choice.

The primary purpose of the initiative is to allow high-quality state school teachers to be recognised for their work within the classroom and create a pathway to retain this expertise in the classroom. The need for common professional teaching standards across Australia is recognised by the Commonwealth and other state governments. The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL, was established on 1 January 2010 following a Commonwealth review of teaching in Australia and by a decision made in 2009 by the then ministerial council for education, early childhood development and youth affairs.

AITSL provides national leadership for the Commonwealth, state and territories government by promoting excellence in the profession of teaching and school leadership. In December 2010 Commonwealth, state and territory education ministers endorsed the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers developed by AITSL which provides a framework for the teaching profession. The framework is organised into four career stages, commencing at graduate, progressing to proficient which is required for full registration, followed by aspirational and voluntary stages of highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher. The professional standards have been recognised in the QCT act since 2012. The college is Queensland's teacher registration authority and in making registration decisions it assesses beginning teachers against the professional standards graduate requirements.

However, the QCT act does not provide for the college to certify expert teachers at the highly accomplished and lead teacher career stages. These are aspirational and volunteer career stages. They provide a step teachers can take should they choose to have their expertise recognised against the highly accomplished or lead teacher standards of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. This rigorous process will lead to new levels of remuneration.

Certification is not required for, nor has any bearing on, an individual teacher's registration. Under AITSL's guide to the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Australia, certification has three primary purposes: to recognise and promote quality teaching; to provide an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice; and to provide a reliable indication of quality teaching that can be used to identify, recognise and/or reward highly accomplished and lead certified teachers.

As part of the framework, a certifying authority is responsible for administering the national certification process in that jurisdiction. Its role includes assessing and granting certification of teachers at highly accomplished and lead teacher career stages against the professional standards as a common national reference; conducting assessor training programs for assessors and jurisdictional officers; maintaining records of teachers who have applied for certification, and those who are certified and at which career stage; participating in quality assurance and review processes to support national consistency; and reporting to AITSL on implementation of the nationally consistent processes for certification.

In accordance with its commitment to ensuring quality education in Queensland, the government committed in 2015 to developing and implementing the highly accomplished and lead teacher career stages by 2019. The department of education worked in consultation with stakeholders and the college to design and deliver a pilot of the certification process, which concluded in 2018. The college performed the role of certifying authority for the pilot under its existing legislative framework. However, this current legislative authority is not sufficient for an ongoing role as a certifying authority.

The college is an appropriate and viable body to act as an ongoing certifying authority. It is an existing independent external statutory body, which already has the function of approving registration of all Queensland teachers at the first two career levels of the professional standards. The college has gained experience from the pilot in undertaking the certification process and has established procedures and capabilities that allow it to continue to perform the certifying role on an ongoing basis. There is support from stakeholders for the college to perform this role.

In order to transition the college to the role of an ongoing certifying authority for highly accomplished and lead teachers, amendments are required to the QCT act to provide the college the function of a certifying authority, as well as providing for the associated application and decision-making processes, payment of fees and review processes. Accordingly, the bill amends the QCT act to prescribe new functions for the college to perform the role of a certifying authority in accordance with the professional standards, including being able to engage and deliver training to other entities to support the college to undertake the role; enable fully registered teachers who are employed in a prescribed school to be able to apply to the college for certification and renewal of certification at highly accomplished and lead teacher career stages; provide for fees to be paid to the college to help meet the cost of the provision of the certification services; allow the college to maintain a record of certified teachers; and provide for an internal review process for the college's decisions, with external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

The bill provides that a fully registered teacher who is an Australian resident or permanent resident, and employed by an employing authority for a school that is prescribed in a regulation, may apply to the college for certification and renewal of certification. An application for certification will be made to the college in an approved form. The approved form may require additional information and documents to be provided with the form to support the teacher's application for certification or renewal of certification.

The bill amends the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016 to prescribe state schools and Catholic schools represented by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission as the employing authorities of teachers who may apply to the college for certification. The bill does not prevent other certifying authorities operating in Queensland. Therefore, Independent Schools Queensland, which is currently an AITSL recognised certifying authority, will continue to certify teachers from its member schools as highly accomplished or lead teachers.

The bill sets out a two-stage assessment process for certification. The bill also amends the regulation to prescribe the application fees. In line with the two-stage assessment process, the \$1,500 certification fee will be paid in stages: \$850 is paid by applicants for stage 1; and teachers successful at stage 1 will pay \$650 for stage 2. The bill also enables a regulation to prescribe particular processes should it be deemed necessary during implementation.

The bill provides for a high-level framework without prescribing processes in detail. This ensures flexibility in the way certification is administered over time to allow the college to be able to adapt to changes in national certification processes without needing significant legislative change. Consequently, elements of the certification process will not be prescribed such as the appointment of assessors, the procedures relating to assessment and the documentation required to be provided by applicants. These processes and procedures will be undertaken in accordance with the professional standards and guide to certification, which are available on the AITSL website.

It is important to note that whether a Queensland school employing authority recognises highly accomplished and lead teacher certification and how it affects matters such as remuneration and working conditions will be a decision for each employing authority and is not impacted by the bill. The bill ensures Queensland teachers have new career levels to which they can aspire while retaining the current registration system. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (12.15 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee.