




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. I think it is a good bill. I learnt a bit about this issue not so much through my parliamentary exposure but when I was visited by a delegation of teachers from the Queensland Teachers' Union some weeks back. The local delegate, Chris Smith, gave me an indication of what the implications will be for the teaching profession and I was quite impressed. The bill is intended 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 and to enable the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of certifying authority for the certification of highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers and to provide for an effective, transparent certification process with decisions subject to appropriate reviews.

What we are looking at here is a scheme that will enable those teachers who have the necessary skills and qualifications to qualify as lead teachers and highly accomplished teachers so that they may stay in a hands-on teaching role and still progress professionally without having to necessarily leave the classroom as so many do. Talking to the teachers in my electorate, particularly ones from the very small schools, those who are teaching principals, progression comes at a cost because many of them miss their exposure to the children, they have to take time away from the kids to do the leadership and administration duties that are their job.

This scheme rings a bell. When I was an officer in the Air Force we had what was known as spec aircrew. That was a scheme where officers who wished to remain as pilots and navigators and progress in rank but not end up in a desk job as they progressed through their career were able to do so. They could progress, within reason, in rank, be paid more and concentrate purely on aircraft operations and flying. That was a successful scheme. I can see strong parallels with this purpose here and I think that is a good thing.

I would like to compliment the minister on one particular passage of her introductory speech. She said—

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.

The minister is spot on there. In my own electorate I see teachers doing those very things. They are empowering minds and creating opportunities. As our kids progress through school we develop a strong relationship with the teachers. I talked about small schools. My own children go to a very small school south of Stanthorpe with about 50 kids. There are some schools with fewer pupils than that. Having an autistic son, I have been extremely happy with the standard of teaching.

Ms Grace: Hear, hear!

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection from the minister. I know that the teachers aspire to professional excellence. That is absolutely abundantly clear. As I travelled around the country in the Air Force my son had been to a number of schools and settling in a small state school in my electorate where teachers

embody those things that the minister mentioned in her introductory speech has been very important to me. I particularly acknowledge the principal, Alun Roberts, and teachers, Natalie Siddons, Cheriee Forbes, Belinda Jamieson and Lydia Wullems and all the staff there. That sort of excellence needs to have a focus point. This bill gives excellent teachers, teachers who want to remain in a hands-on role, the opportunity to excel and to have a formal recognition that they can be proud of.

My understanding is that this will not be a walk in the park. The standard will be extremely high and rightly so. I believe that is necessary because we want to make sure that the qualification is, indeed, something to be aspired to and that it has value. I support the bill. I look forward to seeing some of these lead teachers and highly accomplished teachers in my own electorate. I commend the bill to the House.