




Speech By  
**Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEES**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

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

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (4.16 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. This was a really lovely bill and inquiry to chair. The opportunity to talk not only about teachers but particularly those who are distinguished for excellence within their profession was a wonderful one. We all know that quality teachers are at the very heart of maintaining a high-quality education system in this state. I take the opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution teachers make each and every day across our great state, particularly those fabulous teachers living and working in my electorate of Nudgee. I thank them for their service to our young people and to education in this state.

Teachers are second only to parents in regard to the significant influence they exert in a young person's life. I have seen this firsthand over the past three years as I have had to as a mother watch my two gorgeous boys, Jordan and Ollie, leave the family home and start kindy and prep. There is a great trust we place as parents in teachers to encourage, guide and shape our young children, and it can be a great burden they carry in doing so.

My husband and I take every opportunity as parents to thank and support our children's teachers and we expect our children to show respect in the classroom and do likewise. Teachers deserve our community's respect, and I take this opportunity to make the point that abuse, whether in the classroom or online, from students or parents must always be called out and stamped out.

This bill presents an opportunity to not only recognise high-performing schoolteachers across Queensland but also to encourage them to continue their role in the classroom, because they should not have to leave the classroom if their passion is teaching to seek advancement in leadership or central office positions. Because some teachers, whether they have been teaching for five or 25 years, want to remain in the classroom because that is where they feel called and where they feel they can make the greatest difference, and we want them to do just that.

In 2015 our government made a commitment to transform and modernise the teaching profession under the letting teachers teach initiative and established two new voluntary classifications. This bill is giving effect to that commitment, and I acknowledge warmly the leadership of our education minister, Grace Grace, in bringing these changes before the parliament for debate.

The bill establishes a new function for the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of a certifying authority for highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers in accordance with the Australian professional standards for teachers. It allows fully registered teachers who are employed in prescribed schools to be able to apply to the college for certification and renewal of certification at highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher career stages.

The bill provides for an internal review process for Queensland College of Teachers' decisions, with a further option of an external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The bill prescribes the fees of \$1,500 to be paid by applicants to the College of Teachers for two stages of assessment—\$850 for stage 1 and, if successful, \$650 for stage 2.

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 teachers and lead teacher certified teachers. These are aspirational career stages, providing a step teachers can take, as certification is voluntary, that may lead to new levels of remuneration and challenges while remaining a classroom teacher.

The pilot showed that the bar is high. Highly accomplished teachers are highly effective and knowledgeable classroom teachers. They are advocates of the profession who contribute to the professional learning of peers through a range of activities that includes supporting, working with and assisting their colleagues. Lead teachers are exemplary classroom teachers—the highest professional teacher stage. They are committed to quality teaching and learning, and their leadership impacts students and their colleagues across and beyond the school. To be certified as a lead teacher, an applicant must also have led a lead initiative within their school or across schools designed to build the capacity of colleagues. As I said, the bar is high and those who attain this aspirational certification are certainly very worthy of the formal recognition.

As I mentioned earlier, a key tenet of the bill and of certification is to keep expert teachers in the classroom. The formal recognition and reward of Queensland's best teachers will be an important tool in continuing to provide quality education for Queenslanders, but it is also a just and deserved opportunity for those who distinguish themselves through their expertise.

Submitters were united in their support of the bill, of the introduction of certification for highly accomplished and lead teachers, and for the Queensland College of Teachers to be assigned the role of certifying authority—a role they performed during the trial period. As certifying authority, the College of Teachers will: assess and grant certification of teachers at highly accomplished and lead teacher career stages against the national standards; conduct assessor training programs; maintain records of teachers who have applied for certification and those who are certified and at which career stage; participate in quality assurance and review processes; and report to the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, AITSL, on implementation of the nationally consistent processes for certification.

The QCT is Queensland's teacher registration authority, and submitters advised the committee that the QCT is ideally placed to perform this important role and is highly respected for the way it carries out its role currently. I also note that the teacher registration authorities in New South Wales, the ACT and the Northern Territory undertake this important certification role.

With respect to the Catholic sector, highly accomplished and lead teacher certification has been available to teachers in Queensland Catholic schools since July 2018. Dr Lee-Anne Perry, executive director of QCEC, advised the committee that, although no Catholic school teachers have undertaken certification to date, those who are currently preparing and planning to do so will benefit from the QCT being the certifying authority. In addition to the Queensland College of Teachers being certifying authority for state and Catholic schools, Independent Schools Queensland is a certifying authority for teachers engaged in the independent school sector and has been performing this role for some time.

Key issues raised during the committee's hearing went to the cost of the fees to applicants and to the certifying authority of carrying out the fairly intensive process and to remuneration. The department stated in regard to fees that it is intended that the fees would—

significantly contribute to the costs of the certifying authority, while not representing a significant impediment or disincentive to applicants.

Further, that 'should it be deemed necessary' fees can be changed in the future to reflect the costs of certification to employing authorities.

In respect of remuneration, the bill does not require a Queensland school employing authority to recognise certification or to provide additional remuneration. This is essentially a matter for each education sector. The issue is settled in relation to state school teachers, however, with schools not required to find additional funding to pay allocated teachers who are successfully certified at lead or highly accomplished levels. These costs will be met centrally by the department. Provision has been made for state school teachers who are certified to be remunerated at a commensurate higher salary level as negotiated with the Queensland Teachers Union as part of the 2019 teachers' enterprise bargaining agreement. It will be for teachers in the independent and Catholic sector to seek similar and much deserved recognition in this regard as part of their respective enterprise agreements. The minister has addressed in detail the other issue raised by the QCEC—revocation of certification—and the issues raised by the Independent Education Union. I thank the minister for providing that detailed information.

Again, submitters were united in their support of the bill and I thank them for making written submissions and appearing before the committee to assist us with our inquiry. The Queensland Catholic Education Commission, the Queensland Teachers' Union, Independent Schools Queensland, the Queensland College of Teachers and Independent Education Union Queensland Branch all made submissions and, as always, brought significant expertise and value to our deliberations. I would also like to acknowledge my fellow committee members—the deputy chair and member for Currumbin, my colleagues the members for Maryborough and Cairns, and the members for Hinchinbrook and Pumicestone for their contributions—as well as our committee secretariat, Hansard and the Department of Education. I commend the bill to the House.