




Speech By
Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.34 pm): I have only been in this chamber for a short period of time, but I must say there are times when I am often reminded of the words of the great American president—what was his name again? The guy who got shot—what was his name? I think he might have said something along the lines of—

Government members interjected.

Mr HEALY: It is always very important. It must have been a reflection of my education. I think it could have been Abraham Lincoln. I was waiting for a comment from the other side, but that could take hours. He made the comment, 'It is better to keep your mouth shut and be thought of as a fool rather than open it and remove all doubt.'

It is an absolute pleasure to rise to talk about this very important bill, the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. It is very, very reassuring to see that even though there is a little dysfunctional presentation in some areas, everybody understandably is in agreeance but finds it difficult to articulate.

There is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that teaching is an important and a fundamental profession and it is essential that we give every single child in this state the best that we can. This bill is part of establishing a new function for the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of certifying highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers in accordance with the Australian professional standards for teachers, including being able to engage and deliver training to other entities, which is absolutely important. It also enables fully registered teachers who are employed in prescribed schools to be able to apply to QCT for certification and renewal of certification as highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers. It is absolutely essential that we are creating this criteria and expanding it. It enables QCT to engage prescribed third parties to assist in delivering certification functions. It also allows QCT to maintain a record of certified teachers, which is important. It provides for an internal review process for QCT decisions with a further option of external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

This is key in retaining good teachers in the classroom. It is a key step to ensuring good education outcomes in Queensland. In 2015 the Queensland government made a commitment to transform and modernise the teaching profession under the Letting Teachers Teach initiative and establish two voluntary classifications—as I have said, highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers—endorsed by the Australian education ministers through the Education Council.

The primary purpose of this initiative is to allow teachers to be recognised for their work within the classroom and inspire them to stay and continue to improve their practice as opposed to them seeking career progression into school leadership roles or leaving the profession altogether. Like every member in this parliament, I have some wonderful schools and wonderful teachers. I have Chris Zilm at the Cairns State High School, an executive principal who does an outstanding job administering this school. He had to make a decision whether to teach or go on and become an administrator. At 'T Bay'

there is Martin Woodcock. That school is the recipient of significant funding to see an enhancement and new buildings, and I thank the minister for that. We have discussed this at length. These are men who have made decisions to go into the administrative role, but no doubt they are also enormously talented teachers. This legislation is fundamental to ensure that we retain those good teachers. I am confident that is why there is support across the chamber. As I said, as opposed to some of these teachers seeking career progression in other areas, we need to attempt to secure more generous remuneration packages and statuses.

This also supports promoting the teaching profession as an attractive career option by creating new career options for potentially higher remuneration. It stated that teachers would be able to apply for certification of HAT or LT in 2019. A framework for that certification will allow teachers to seek higher career levels, if they wish, while continuing to be a teacher in the classroom. As part of this framework, a certifying authority is required in accordance with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership's *Guide to the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Australia*. QCT is a most appropriate and viable body to act as the certifying authority as it is an existing independent external statutory body with an in-depth knowledge of these processes.

For the QCT to perform the role of certifying authority on an ongoing basis, legislative amendment is necessary to extend its functions under the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005 and, more importantly, the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016 to provide appropriate authority for this.

What sort of teachers are we talking about and what sort of standards do we expect? These highly accomplished teachers are highly effective, skilled classroom practitioners who work independently and collaboratively to plan, evaluate and modify teaching programs to improve student learning and take on roles that guide, advise or lead others to improve the educational outcomes for students. This provides for a mentoring role, which is essential in this area. The more experienced teachers can help the younger teachers. It is a fantastic inclusion.

Highly accomplished teachers also maximise learning opportunities for students, understanding their backgrounds and characteristics that impact their learning; have in-depth knowledge of subject and curriculum content and keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialist content area—going above and beyond; and are skilled in analysing student assessment data and use it to improve teaching and learning. These days, where we have identified so many learning challenges, this is essential. Teachers need to be able to cut their leather to their measure. Highly accomplished teachers also monitor their own professional learning needs and align them to the learning needs of students. That goes without saying. Most importantly, they behave ethically at all times and possess highly developed interpersonal presentation skills and communicate effectively and respectfully with students, colleagues, parents, carers and community members.

Who is eligible for this certification? The bill provides that a teacher is eligible to apply to the college for certification if: they are an Australian citizen who holds a permanent visa under the Commonwealth Migration Act, which includes New Zealanders; holds full registration; and are employed in a Queensland school by a participating employing authority prescribed by regulation. At this point that is the state system and the Catholic system. Independent schools have a different certifying authority.

The national professional standards also require that an eligible teacher have an authentic teaching role—that is, work in the classroom or equivalent teaching students—and have been assessed as satisfactory in their two most recent annual performance reviews for those applying for highly accomplished teachers or three for lead teachers.

I would like to acknowledge my learned colleagues who participated in the committee and thank each and every one of them for their contribution, as unique as it may have been at times. I would also like to thank everybody who turned up before the committee and made their contribution. This is a good piece of legislation, it is essential for our kids and I strongly support it.