




Speech By  
**Scott Stewart**

**MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE**

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

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (5.28 pm): I rise today to speak on the bill.

**Ms Grace:** What a great principal you were!

**Mr STEWART:** Thank you. I take that interjection from minister. I rise today to speak in the debate on the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill before the House. When I started in the profession there were not lead teachers or highly accomplished teachers, but there certainly were some great teachers. I think I heard someone say it was when the cane was around. It absolutely was. I wielded it a couple of times and I received it a couple of times, let me tell members just quietly.

Great teachers have impacted our lives. I bet each and every member in this House today can think of a great teacher who impacted their lives and led them down a pathway that led them here today.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr STEWART:** Yes, we are hearing some names already. Mine was Tony Parsons. I acknowledge that Tony Parsons was the man who helped shape me, my life and my teaching. From Kelvin Grove High he went to Harristown State High School and continued being a head of department there. The reason I talk about Tony Parsons is because back in those days when we were teaching there was no framework for what made a good teacher. I kept thinking to myself when I started my teaching career—and I know it is hard to believe that I was a phys. ed. teacher, as you can tell by my sleek greyhound physique—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr STEWART:** Age shall not weary us.

**An opposition member:** I can just see you in tennis shorts.

**Mr STEWART:** Please! I will not take that interjection! What I found myself doing in my teaching moments was using Tony Parsons and saying, 'What would he do at this particular time? What would be Tony's expectations? What would Tony do with this particular student?' When the AITSL national professional standards for teachers were introduced, I still used that Tony Parsons' lens and thought about where I would fit him under that criteria. In my several decades of teaching, Tony was my guiding light.

Under this bill we have a set of standards to which people can aspire. Why do we do this? There is some great research out there by a fellow by the name of Mike Schmoker—what a great name that is! Mike Schmoker said that 50 per cent of what impacts on a student's learning is their family—their attitudes towards education, where they come from, their environment, their home environment, those sorts of things. Ten per cent of the impact on a student's learning is their peers and another 10 per cent is the school they go to, but the biggest single factor that any school can control is the quality of teaching. Some 30 per cent of what contributes to students' learning outcomes is the teacher. We can manage and shape that, and that is exactly what this is about.

Everyone in this House has already talked about keeping great teachers in our classroom—those great teachers that we all think about, and we are doing it right now. We are thinking about one of those great teachers that impacted on our life. Keep them in our classrooms, because they will impact not only students in our classrooms right now but also students in years to come. This will impact on the students when they grow up and when they go into their professional lives. The impact of those teachers shapes us as professionals. It shapes us in this House right now. They will shape future teachers. At this stage I have not heard anyone stand up and say that having great teachers in our classrooms builds the capacity of our future teachers because they will nurture them through. I can remember many times—and I am sure you, Madam Deputy Speaker, did the same as a beginning teacher as well—going to the old heads, the wise ones, the ones who had that teaching experience, and asking them, ‘What would you do here?’

This is about keeping those great teachers in our classrooms, working with our new young teachers and guiding them down that road so that in years to come we can have even better teachers. Essentially, this is what the bill is about. It is about rewarding those great teachers by keeping them in the classroom. I acknowledge and accept exactly what the member for Toowoomba North said. He said that his wife was teaching for 25 years but that her only pathway was into admin. We took a great teacher out of a classroom and put her into admin so she could get remunerated. It is a sad day when we do not have those career paths for outstanding teachers to continue to influence those kids, to continue to build our future. This is about making sure we get this right.

We in this great state have evolved over our 200 years of education and heard from those opposite about what they did along the road. I am reluctant to use the word ‘journey’ because I think it is overused. As we continue down the path of education, this is about evolving into a great system of education that recognises high quality, high performing—as the member for Kawana says—and the best of the best. It is about keeping our great teachers in our classrooms, working with our great teachers and not having to rely on promoting them into administration roles. It is about not forcing them out of the classrooms so that they can continue to work up the ladder. More importantly, lead and highly accomplished teachers will mentor and build the capacity of our future teachers, and I think that is essential.

This time tomorrow afternoon, our teachers will start their two weeks of holidays. They will probably kick it off with a nice refreshing beverage of some description, and they deserve it. However, I can guarantee that these great teachers, these lead and highly accomplished teachers, will not hang up their boots for the two weeks. They will continue to create resources for their classroom, continue to plan the next term’s worth of work, continue to write pieces of assessment, continue to write reports, continue to mark the pieces of work from their students and provide some great feedback so that those students can continue to become great students because they have high-quality feedback from those teachers. They will continue to do that over the next two weeks.

For those out there who think teachers will have two weeks off and, ‘Wouldn’t it be a great life as a teacher?’, think again, because highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers will continue to work during these holidays, the next holidays, those after that, over Christmas and for the rest of their career. They continue to focus solely on what is best for those kids. Let us remunerate our great teachers by keeping them in the classroom and working with the clay of the future, our students. This is what this bill is about.

Having said that they will work over the next four days, I strongly encourage teachers to make sure they spend a bit of time tipping back into the family bucket. Maybe those four days of Easter are a great time to spend time with family. Teachers work exceptionally long hours. Those of us married to teachers or who have teachers as parents or kids know exactly what I am talking about. Everyone in this House recognises great teachers. Everyone recognises that this bill is about rewarding and remunerating great teachers to keep them in the classroom, because of the impact they have on our lives. Again, I encourage members right now, right this minute—and everyone listening to this—to think about one of those great teachers who impacted their life. Let us keep them in the classroom.

For me, this is about making sure that the Tony Parsons of this world who impacted on my life, shaped me into the teacher I am and shaped me into the politician standing here today delivering this speech, are kept in the classrooms. They impact upon our kids to ensure that we provide the best learning outcomes for each and every one of our kids and that those outcomes are not based on NAPLAN results. This is not based on NAPLAN results; it is based on a set of agreed criteria at the national level to ensure that we get, as the member for Kawana says, the best of the best. I thank each and every one of our teachers for their work in our classrooms, for shaping our future kids and for shaping more great teachers to become lead and highly accomplished teachers.