



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (5.24 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025. Firstly, I will address the child safety amendments. These new child safety amendments bring forward the requirement of specific sectors to implement sooner the Reportable Conduct Scheme protections delivered by the former Labor government last year, and we will support these amendments as they go towards improving the safety of children in this state. Queensland children deserve every protection from child abuse and exploitation. The Reportable Conduct Scheme is designed to do just that—protect children from harm. It will require organisations to report and investigate concerns of harm to children while ensuring consistent and transparent responses across all sectors. Requiring the Reportable Conduct Scheme to be fully implemented by July 2026 will be a further step on the road to delivering those protections.

The Queensland Family and Child Commission will have oversight of the Reportable Conduct Scheme, and I cannot think of a better organisation to lead this important task. In bringing forward the RCS implementation requirement for all sectors to 1 July 2026, it is important that the QFCC, as the administering and independent oversight body, is adequately resourced to deal with this extra demand in a shorter timeframe.

The Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025, which the committee consulted on, reflects many of the same amendments proposed by the former Labor government before the dissolution of the 57th Parliament. At the time, Labor committed to genuine consultation, particularly on sensitive reforms such as those relating to school disciplinary absences and homeschooling. Following that consultation, the former government rightly chose not to proceed with those particular provisions without broader community consensus.

It is worth noting that many of the measures now reintroduced by the current government were originally developed, consulted on and supported under Labor. I congratulate former minister Farmer for her diligence and her integrity in managing the consultation process and truly listening to our stakeholders. We welcome their return in this bill. The bill suggests that it focuses on improving clarity, reducing duplication and strengthening student safety and continuity of learning.

I turn to transfers between schools. The removal of the requirement for reassessment when transferring between special schools is a sensible change that prioritises student wellbeing and respects previous assessments. The mandatory use of transfer notes between schools is a clear response to the 2017 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and we support its intent to strengthen information sharing to keep children safe. As the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association noted in their submission, this change enhances safety and ensures 'a more seamless transition' between schools.

I turn to the homeschooling reforms. The bill contains only one provision from the previous homeschooling reform package, and that is the extension of registration eligibility from age 17 to 18. This change was strongly supported by home education stakeholders at the time—and I welcome them

in the gallery today; it is good to see you again—and it continues to enjoy widespread backing. It ensures students completing their education in home settings can do so with ongoing support and access to school-based opportunities like sport and travel.

The digital learning and privacy aspect of the bill establishes a framework for sharing personal information with approved online services. We support this modernisation but we note concerns raised by the Office of the Information Commissioner and PeakCare. The opposition urges the government to take these concerns seriously and ensure appropriate data protections are in place. As schools increasingly rely on external providers, there must be clear accountability for how student information is collected, stored and used.

I turn to support for the P&Cs. This aspect of the bill introduces several practical reforms for parents and citizens' associations. These include allowing P&Cs to donate physical goods to schools in times of natural disasters and enabling multicampus schools to have more tailored representation. Importantly, the bill also bars individuals convicted of indictable offences from serving on a P&C executive committee—a sensible safeguard that aligns with community expectations.

In relation to the behavioural provisions, the ability for principals to delegate the communication of a suspension to a deputy principal or other authorised person is a small, but welcome, change. It reflects the reality of modern school leadership, supporting timely communication with families.

The minister has touted this bill as part of the government's so-called red-tape reduction strategy, a key performance indicator in the minister's charter letter, and shadow minister Farmer adequately addressed the alleged red-tape reduction measures the minister espouses, despite the leaders of the department being unable to quantify the resultant time teachers and administrators would save. When questioned during the committee process, the department confirmed there were no metrics to measure whether this bill contributes to that 25 per cent reduction goal—no baseline, no benchmarks and no evidence of how this legislation meets the minister's promises.

It reminded me of 2013 when I was on the current minister's department's red-tape reduction committee. Interestingly, the opening statement in the policy reads, 'The Newman government is committed to cutting red tape by 20 per cent within the next five years,' and it goes on. That was some 12 years ago. It is rehashed, old policy, despite the learning needs and requirements of our students being so significantly different in 2025. I table a copy of this policy from 2013, rehashed by a lazy minister.

Tabled paper: Education Queensland policy document, undated, titled 'Red tape reduction in Queensland state schools' [1604](#).

As mentioned earlier, the government appears to be repackaging initiatives already developed under the former Labor government by former minister Farmer and branding them as new. This is not a strategy; it is a rebrand. Further, stakeholders like the Queensland Teachers' Union have expressed concerns that some measures could actually increase the workload, not reduce it. That is not consistent with the LNP's 100-day plan commitment to reduce the administrative burden on our teachers, of which we have seen no reduction.

During the committee process a number of important operational matters were raised by stakeholders which regrettably were not addressed in the committee's report. These issues are of significant concern to stakeholders and the wider community, and I believe it is important they are raised here.

Several stakeholders, including the Queensland Law Society and the Office of the Information Commissioner, expressed concerns about the protection in place for student data, particularly when this data is shared with service providers or third parties. These stakeholders have recommended stronger mechanisms to manage breaches of student data and that the handling of breaches be transparently reported through the department's annual report.

Currently, the bill allows for provisional registration for home education, and I note that the report makes a recommendation in recommendation No. 2. Up until today, and upon hearing comments from the minister, one could assume that no consideration of recommendation No. 2 in the report has occurred in the seven months since the committee tabled the report.

Submitters such as the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Queensland Secondary Principals' Association have proposed the expansion of the current transfer note scheme. The idea is to enable principals to better track students who leave their school and re-enrol in another in either the state or non-state system. A more robust transfer note scheme could play a critical role in reducing the number of disengaged students, lifting educational outcomes and potentially even contributing to the broader goal of reducing crime and antisocial behaviour. I ask the minister if there is scope within the department or this legislative framework to support the expansion of the transfer note system to improve student engagement and continuity of education.

The Labor opposition supports this bill. Again, I congratulate shadow minister Farmer for the work she did on this bill as minister for education. The changes are measured and practical. They streamline systems, improve student safety and respond to the needs of our school communities. We will continue to hold the government to account. We will ensure their rhetoric matches their reality, especially when it comes to delivering on promises to our educators and to our schools. Shadow minister Farmer and I are both very well placed to ensure that the promises made by the minister which reflect the charter letter are implemented.