



Speech By
David Lee

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

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EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (7.51 pm): I rise to speak to the Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025. This amendment bill strengthens the effective regulation of education in Queensland, and I commend the Minister for Education and the Education, Arts and Communities Committee who diligently prepared the bill before this House. The Crisafulli government is committed to reducing Labor's monumental red tape and regulatory burden on our hardworking Queensland educators.

Our education system is the bedrock of a civil society and can be traced back to the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. Education has given us mathematicians, physicists, scientists, explorers, artists, physicians, philosophers and poets. Queensland's first school opened in 1826 with 16 students, the children of soldiers and convicts from the first settlement in Moreton Bay. In my electorate of Hervey Bay, the first public primary school opened in 1884 at Pialba followed by a private school in 1888. Hervey Bay now has five private schools and eight public schools, including Hervey Bay Special School. Currently, there are at least 9,000 primary and secondary students enrolled in public and private schools in Hervey Bay.

The Minister for Education in his second reading speech and others have comprehensively spoken to the bill's many reforms, including the reportable conduct scheme under the Child Safe Organisations Act 2024 and other technical amendments.

I now turn to approved online services. At any one time our state schools can be using hundreds of online third-party technology solutions for curriculum delivery, assessments, publishing, management operations and communications with parents. Section 426 of the Education (General Provisions) Act currently requires parental consent for each online service that requires information about a student. The existing consent process is incredibly burdensome, compounded by the dramatic increase in the use of online services. There is also a risk of security breaches related to the variability of online service privacy and security protections.

The Department of Education has reported that 349 schools use the Mathletics service, with some larger schools having up to 1,000 software licences. Clause 37 of the bill provides for a modern framework that removes individual consent for each online service. The chief executive officer will approve an online service that requires a disclosure, a recording or use of personal information about a state school student pursuant to the Information Privacy Act 2009 and the national requirements of the Safer Technologies 4 Schools framework. However, in circumstances where online services require sensitive information about a student or are not approved online services, parental or student consent is still required in accordance with a school's obtaining and managing student and individual consent procedures.

Many students in my Hervey Bay electorate are homeschooled. According to a 2024 Department of Education report, there were over 11,000 students registered for home education in Queensland. This represented a 163 per cent increase in home education registrations over the previous five years.

The current legislation provides that a student can only be registered until 31 December in the year in which they turn 17 years of age. Clauses 9 and 10 of the bill will extend the age eligibility by one year to 31 December in the year the student turns 18. This amendment aligns the age eligibility for homeschooling registration with students who attend state or non-state schools.

This bill enables principals also to delegate the notification of suspension decisions. Clauses 12 to 14 of the bill authorise a principal to delegate the notification of a suspension decision to another of the school's senior staff members, including a deputy principal. It is important to note that the principal is still responsible for making a suspension decision. It is the authority to notify that can be delegated to a senior staff member. These amendments will reduce the workload burden on our hardworking school principals.

Our Hervey Bay Special School does a fantastic job in educating our children. I recently attended this outstanding school, and I want to congratulate the principal, Janet Ong, and her dedicated staff for their compassion and professionalism in a challenging field of education. This bill will assist in expediting special school enrolments. Clause 32 will provide that where a student has a disability and the special school is able to cater for the educational needs of the student the principal must enrol the student.

P&C associations are the backbone of our schools. Clause 31 of this bill will insert a new part 11—special provisions for campus associations. It will enable regional state schools with multiple campuses to establish separate P&Cs for each campus. The Minister for Education in his 14 March 2025 introductory speech said—

The proposed reform empowers P&Cs, should they wish, to actively support one another following natural disasters to help fellow school communities and support students.

The bill will allow P&C associations to assist with finances, resources or services to other school communities adversely affected by an event such as a deliberate act, accident or natural disaster. Clauses 28 and 29 of the bill preclude a person convicted of an indictable offence, other than a spent conviction, from being a member of a P&C association executive committee or subcommittee unless approved by the minister.

I now turn to the collection of information from non-state schools. This bill will clarify the roles and responsibilities of non-state schools and reduce the regulatory burden on principals and governance boards when information is requested by the chief executive officer of the Department of Education. The existing legislation provides for transfer notes to be optional. This bill will provide for the Queensland legislation to align with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and make transfer notes a mandatory requirement. This bill requires a principal of a state or non-state school to request a transfer note within 90 days of the student's enrolment in the school. It is set at 90 days rather than 90 school days to avoid time delays such as school holidays. In respect of transfer notes, the transfer note reforms will not commence until up to 12 months after the passage of this bill.

In relation to eKindy, this bill proposes to clarify the distance and medical eligibility criteria for eKindy. The tyranny of distance and medical eligibility is currently precluding persons from registering a child in eKindy. Clause 35 of this bill will change the distance criterion so that a child is eligible if their home is more than 16 kilometres from centre-based care delivering an approved kindergarten program. The bill will also change medical eligibility, making eKindy available to a child who misses 10 weeks cumulatively throughout the year due to a health condition.

In closing, the Crisafulli government is taking a calm and methodical approach to legislative reform of the Education Act. This comes after a decade of a woke and ideological left-leaning Labor government who loved the Kool-Aid of post-modernist theory. I commend the Education (General Provisions) Amendment Bill 2025 to the House.