




Speech By
Hermann Vorster

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL 2025

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.07 pm): The state schooling system is the foundation for the future prosperity of this state. If we properly resource the sector we can unleash incredible things for Queensland. If we can provide our children—that next generation—with knowledge, a love of learning and the cutting-edge skills they need to manoeuvre around a changing economy, we can make sure that we can enliven their aspirations and build something phenomenal in this great part of the Commonwealth. In order to achieve that, we must first unleash the potential of our teachers. We cannot do that if our teachers are constrained by endless process—process that is often a solution in search of a problem. If we can somehow as a state remove the minutiae from that job and allow our teachers to reconnect with their passion, to bring that passion into the classroom, then I think there are better days ahead for Queensland. Unfortunately, though, that is not the Queensland education system we inherited.

Throughout various stages of the consultation, led by our phenomenal education minister, what we found was that teachers were spending their time completing their own homework rather than setting homework for the students in their class. That was grinding them down. I know that because during the recent election campaign I had the opportunity to meet and speak with many teachers on their doorsteps. They told me of a system that had robbed them of the joy of their profession and robbed them of the opportunity to provide the attention that the children in their classrooms so deserved. They ached for change, so at that election when we announced a policy to reduce red tape for teachers and to give schools more power to deliver the education and experience demanded of local communities that was something they could get behind.

Their support and the support of the community delivered us an opportunity to do just that. We did not wait—like the former Labor government waited for 10 years—to do absolutely nothing. We got to work right away. Very quickly the education minister commenced a series of roundtable discussions, bringing together educational practitioners at absolutely every level. When I had occasion to visit some of my local state schools I received incredible feedback from those principals who felt that, after 10 long years, there was finally a government prepared to get off of their backs and give them the freedom and breathing space to deliver the experience that local kids deserved.

I heard that feedback right across my electorate. Again I do want to thank the education minister, who did not just convene a roundtable process across the state of Queensland but who took the time to visit schools individually in my electorate. Whether it was at Caningeraba State School, Burleigh Heads State School or Palm Beach Currumbin State High School, he was there to listen to those delivering education and a better future.

We have now before us a bill that captures the spirit of those reforms. It is important to reflect on the fact that the red-tape reductions announced that are contained as part of this bill are the second step, because quite soon after the election—not even waiting for legislation—our minister took the opportunity to introduce six measures to begin easing the red tape burden. This bill is the second step. In the fullness of time we would have reduced red tape for our educational sector by 25 per cent.

What does it mean to reduce red tape by 25 per cent, which is our commitment? It means teachers being freed up to pay attention to children who need help. It means more time for teachers to sit alongside and inspire those kids prepared to take the very next step. It means that principals have more time to engage with their communities to understand what programs might be needed to meet the challenges of the local area. Time is money, and red-tape reduction is a way of delivering better resource utilisation in our state education system.

It is not just about freeing up time that our government is all about; it is also about securing extra resources and extra funding. As well as doing something today, which Labor were incapable of doing for 10 years, we did something they were also incapable of doing: working with the Commonwealth Government to deliver a funding deal that would finally see our state schools fully funded. It is quite absurd to hear those opposite preach that they are the custodians of the state school system and that only they can be trusted. The results on this side lay their track record exposed because it is this side that reduces red tape, it is this side that backs in teachers and looks after their welfare, and it is this side of the House that secures children the funding and resources they need—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs Nightingale interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr O'Shea): One moment, member for Burleigh. Members for Inala and McConnel, could you stop interjecting, please, and let the member for Burleigh finish his speech.

Mr VORSTER: Thank you so much, Madam Deputy Speaker. Had we been in the classroom, I am sure those members would have ended up in the principal's office. The good news about that is had they been suspended, the principal now need not deliver that news themselves because this act now allows principals to delegate that authority, which frees up their time. I also think about the welfare of students, because for the first time those who are delegated, who may have better and closer relationships with those students and their families, can deliver the news in the most constructive way possible.

I really do want to close, because I know there are many members eager to contribute to this debate as it nears its close. I do want to pay special tribute to school leaders in my community such as Scott Anderson from Palm Beach State School, Rob Templeton, the principal at Burleigh Heads State School—

Ms Grace interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just one moment, member for Burleigh. Member for McConnel, I am going to caution you.

Mr VORSTER:—Mrs Karen Gravendyk, who looks after the primary campus at Varsity College, and Michelle Flynn at Caningeraba State School.

Before I sit down I do now want to reflect on the member for McConnel, and I am only doing this because of her interjections. As a local area councillor I developed an incredibly close relationship with my schools, and I could see that they were being let down by a rotten Labor government. Although I was in the wrong level of government, I wanted to make sure I looked after them. I wrote to the member for McConnel, the then education minister, and I begged and I pleaded with the minister. I said, 'Minister, the needs of Varsity College are not being met by your government. There is a parcel of land that would allow that school to develop more classrooms. There is a parcel of land that would satisfy the parking needs of those teachers. There is a parcel of land that would open up green and open space for that school,' because that school had no oval of its own. The former education minister, the member for McConnel, wrote back and said no. Instead, that land was developed. We now have apartment blocks there and that school forever will have no green and open space of its own. That is a very sad outcome for the central and southern end of the Gold Coast. The fact that the member for McConnel did not take that into consideration when she interjected as I spoke about Varsity College shows that her government never, ever cared about Varsity College. Thank goodness the government changed—

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Now it is getting out of control. I take offence and ask that it be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, the member for McConnel has taken offence. Will you withdraw, please?

Mr VORSTER: I most certainly withdraw. In conclusion, this government is committed to the prosperity of the state—prosperity built on the back of an incredible education system where every student can enjoy the facilities and resources they need. Thank goodness the government changed, because that is precisely the future Queensland kids can look forward to thanks to the work of our education minister.