

Speech By

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EDUCATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr CHIESA (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Education and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2026. This is a bill about reducing unnecessary red tape, strengthening governance, improving clarity, supporting students who need help to re-engage with education, and ensuring our education and arts institutions are operating under modern and effective legislation.

Education is one of the most important responsibilities of any government. It shapes opportunities, it support families and it gives young people the skills, confidence and discipline they need to build a future. In regional areas like Hinchinbrook, schools are more than places of learning; they are part of the fabric of our communities. I know that personally. I attended Ingham state primary school and Ingham State High School, and I remain very proud of that.

Mr Vorster: Great schools!

Mr CHIESA: Great schools; I take the interjection from the member for Burleigh.

Mr Stevens: The best 15 years of your life!

Mr CHIESA: That is right. Those schools, like so many schools across Queensland, have played an important role in shaping generations of young people across the Hinchinbrook electorate, from the northern suburbs of Townsville through to Tully. From our small rural communities to our larger regional centres, our schools sit at the heart of community life. That is why legislation like this is important. Practically, it is about making sure the system works better for schools, teachers, students, families and the wider community.

The bill forms part of a broader reform agenda being delivered by the Crisafulli government. After years of pressure on the education system, this government is focused on getting the basics right—supporting teachers, lifting literacy and numeracy, improving behaviour and safety in classrooms, reducing red tape and ensuring students do not fall through the cracks. The former Labor government had 10 years to address many of these issues. Instead, Queensland was left with teachers burdened by administration, schools dealing with significant maintenance pressures, increasing concerns about bullying and behaviour, and students not always receiving the support they needed early enough. Labor failed to secure a full funding agreement for Queensland state schools during its time in government. It also left Queensland with a repair bill of $400 million across Queensland. Teachers were under increasing pressure and many were frustrated by unnecessary administration and red tape.

The Crisafulli government has taken a different approach. In six months this government has delivered what Labor could not deliver in 10 years: a deal with the federal government to fully fund Queensland state schools. That is a significant achievement and an important investment in the future of Queensland students. We are also delivering more teachers, better classroom support with the Back to School Boost for primary school students—it got a boost just today—a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, a nation-leading antibullying plan, and Behaviour Boost funding to give schools more practical support. This bill sits alongside that broader agenda. It is not the only reform, but it is an important one.

One of the key areas of the bill relates to temporary school sites. This is important because in Queensland, particularly North Queensland, we know that natural disasters and severe weather events can disrupt communities very quickly. Cyclones, floods and major weather events are common in communities like Hinchinbrook. They are part of life in the tropics. When a school site is affected by an emergency, the priority must be continuity of education and student safety. This bill extends and clarifies temporary site arrangements so non-state schools can continue operating from a temporary site where needed. This is particularly relevant in regional Queensland. When families are already dealing with the stress of an emergency or disruption, the education system needs to be flexible enough to respond. Students need stability, parents need certainty and schools need clear rules. This bill helps provide that clarity.

Another significant part of the bill relates to re-engagement in education, training and employment. This is one of the most important aspects of the legislation. Not every young person follows a simple or straightforward path through school. Some students become disengaged. Some face complex family, social, behavioural or personal challenges. Some are not immediately ready to return to a conventional classroom setting, but that does not mean they should be written off. This bill clarifies that the Department of Education and prescribed non-government providers may support children and young people through education, re-entry and transition service programs until they are ready to return to school or move into another eligible education, training or employment pathway. This is an important reform.

We know that education is one of the strongest protective factors in a young person's life. It provides routine and it provides structure. It connects young people with supportive adults. It builds confidence and gives them a pathway to employment and participation in the community. When a young person disconnects from education, the consequences can be serious. It can affect their future work prospects, their wellbeing and their connection to the community. In some cases it can increase the risk of further disengagement or offending. That is why re-engagement matters. This bill recognises that some young people need a pathway back. They need support, structure and accountability. They need a system that does not simply say, 'You're either in or out' but instead works to bring them back into learning. This is good education policy and it is good social policy.

The bill also clarifies the status of education and training centres in youth detention centres as state educational institutions. This is important because even when a young person is in detention education must remain part of that response. If we are serious about rehabilitation, if we are serious about accountability and if we are serious about breaking cycles of offending, then education must be part of that process. Young people in detention still need access to structured learning. They still need pathways. They still need the opportunity to build skills that may help them make different choices in the future. This bill provides greater legislative clarity around that.

The bill also makes practical amendments relating to information sharing. Of course, when information is being shared about children and young people, privacy matters and safeguards matter but the system has to work. Too often young people fall through the cracks because different parts of the system are not connected. If a student is moving through a re-engagement program and then transitioning back to a school or another pathway, the right people need the right information at the right time. This bill helps enable that while still recognising the need for proper safeguards.

The bill also expands the model for international delivery of the Queensland Certificate of Education. The QCE is a strong and recognised senior secondary qualification. This reform will allow eligible Queensland non-state schools to partner with overseas schools under QCAA oversight and quality assurance arrangements. This is an opportunity to promote Queensland's education system internationally while maintaining standards and oversight. It shows confidence in the quality of Queensland education and provides a framework for appropriate international delivery.

The bill also makes a number of important changes across the arts portfolio. Queensland's major arts statutory bodies play an important role in our cultural life, our economy and our communities. They support artists, audiences, education, tourism and livability. As we look towards the Olympics in 2032, Queensland's cultural institutions will have an even greater role to play in showcasing who we are. This bill modernises governance arrangements for a number of arts statutory bodies, strengthening accountability, improving consistency and reducing unnecessary administrative complexity.

It also includes reforms to help protect consumers from ticket scalping at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. Ticket scalping can lead to inflated prices and disappointment from patrons who unknowingly purchase invalid or unauthorised tickets. Queenslanders deserve confidence when they buy tickets to a performance or event. These reforms are about fairness, transparency and consumer protection.

Importantly, this bill has been through the committee process. The committee received submissions, had a public briefing and public hearing and recommended that the bill be passed. For the people of Hinchinbrook, the most important test is whether the legislation helps deliver better outcomes in the real world. This bill does. It reduces red tape, it strengthens governance, it improves clarity for schools, it supports continuity of education during disruptions, it helps young people reconnect with learning, it modernises important education and arts bodies, and it protects consumers. Most importantly, it forms part of the broader commitment by the Crisafulli government to restore focus, discipline and support to Queensland's education system. Our teachers deserve support, our students deserve opportunity, our families deserve confidence and our schools deserve a system that works with them, not against them.