

016 ~~Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Robinson): Order! The time for matters of public interest has expired.~~

EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY) BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. JH LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (11.59 am): I present a bill for an act to establish the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, to confer particular functions and powers on the authority and to make related minor and consequential amendments to this act and the other acts mentioned in schedule 1. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Education and Innovation Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013.

Tabled paper: Education (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Bill 2013, explanatory notes.

This bill will establish a new statutory body, the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The authority will perform curriculum and assessment functions to support quality educational outcomes in Queensland schools. It will be responsible for certification of senior school achievement and provide student rankings—such as the overall position—to enable tertiary entrance. The new authority is intended to replace the Queensland Studies Authority, the QSA, from 1 July 2014.

The educational landscape has changed considerably since the QSA commenced over a decade ago. We have seen the introduction of NAPLAN testing, national school reporting, the growth of vocational education and training in schools, the introduction of the preparatory year, universal access to kindergarten and the replacement of the Senior Certificate with the Queensland Certificate of Education. This landscape is due to change even more.

The Australian Curriculum is setting curriculum content and standards of achievement for all Australian schools. Queensland schools have begun to implement the Australian Curriculum for years P-10 in English, mathematics, science and history, with remaining P-10 subjects set to be implemented by 2016. Australian Curriculum subjects for years 11 and 12 are to be introduced in coming years in English, mathematics, science, history and geography.

Senior assessment processes in maths and science have been the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, which has recently made a number of substantive recommendations. Our broader senior assessment model and tertiary entrance arrangements, which have served us well for many years, are under review by the Australian Council of Educational Research, ACER. This independent review will help ensure we remain at the forefront of best practice nationally and internationally.

Against a background of change, I asked the Department of Education, Training and Employment to review the Education (Queensland Studies Authority) Act 2002 and to look at the QSA's legislative powers, functions and structure. This process built on previous reviews such as the 2006 review of the QSA act by Emeritus Professor Philip Meade and the Webbe-Weller review of non-departmental government bodies. It also involved high-level consultation with the QSA and the chief executives of the three Queensland schooling sectors—the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, the Association of Independent Schools Queensland and Education Queensland.

Based on this review, our government has confirmed the need for a statutory body to oversee school curriculum and assessment frameworks. The development of school curriculum should be driven by experts and practitioners—persons with a deep understanding of education and academic disciplines. It is important for curriculum content to be set by an independent body at arm's length from government.

Further, while the Australian Curriculum will set content and standards for key school subjects, it will not meet all the syllabus requirements of Queensland schools. In the senior years, the Australian Curriculum will cover 16 subjects in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. Senior syllabuses for other subjects, for example accounting or languages, will be developed by states and territories. States and territories will continue to be responsible for determining school assessment processes for these subjects.

High-stakes processes such as NAPLAN testing, senior certification and tertiary entrance ranking are best administered by an independent entity that is clearly at arm's length from the

department and schooling sectors. For these reasons, all Australian states and territories have a statutory body responsible for developing senior curriculum, supporting comparable school assessment and issuing year 12 certificates.

This government is committed to a Queensland statutory curriculum authority playing a central role in our changing educational landscape. This role is to be performed under a new, modern legislative framework that provides a clear delineation of the authority's roles and functions. In particular, the new legislation will specifically reflect the authority's role in the progressive roll-out of the Australian Curriculum.

It is also important to note that the incoming federal government has indicated that they will be reviewing the Australian Curriculum. This bill will allow for the authority to address any changes as a result of this review.

The new legislation will also promote effective corporate governance through a streamlined, expert governing body. Strong, expert strategic governance will be critical in enabling the authority to lead the implementation of senior Australian Curriculum subjects and implement changes arising from the ACER review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes.

The timeframes for this legislative change were carefully considered. One option would have been to await the outcomes of the review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance in July 2014. However, this would have meant that the implementation of any changes would be likely to occur no earlier than mid-2015. This would not be ideal, as it may coincide with foundational work on new senior syllabuses based on the Australian Curriculum.

The senior assessment and tertiary entrance functions set out in the bill are broad and are likely to accommodate any specific process changes arising from the ACER review without the need for significant legislative amendment. Therefore, the intention is for the new authority to commence operation on 1 July 2014. This will ensure the transition to a new body is bedded down before the implementation of the new senior syllabus subjects based on the Australian Curriculum.

Mid-year commencement ensures that transitions to a new authority will not coincide with end-of-year senior certification and tertiary entrance processes. It will also simplify accounting and financial reporting requirements.

Strong, expert strategic governance will be critical in allowing the authority to lead the implementation of senior Australian Curriculum subjects and any changes arising from the review of tertiary entrance and senior assessment processes. Governance is as much an issue of interpersonal dynamics as it is an issue of formal structure. As such, I greatly appreciate the contribution made by those who have participated on the QSA governing body. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the vision and leadership of those who have served as chairpersons of the QSA. However, this government has determined that the new body should operate through a streamlined, seven-member governing body. This structure is intended to support clear strategic direction and prioritisation of effort and resources across a wide range of competing demands. It is also more aligned with corporate governance structures generally adopted across Australian public and private sector organisations.

Members of the governing body will be selected on the basis of knowledge, experience and standing relevant to the functions of the authority. It is recognised that the governing body must have a clear understanding of schools and school operating environments. To this end, the governing body will include a nominee from each of the three schooling sectors.

It is intended that the new body will be informed by the knowledge and perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders—including the teaching workforce, parents, principals, universities, training providers and industry. This will occur through participation on committees that will provide advice and recommendations to the governing body. The governing body will have the ability to establish committees to assist the exercise of its functions and powers. This will provide the authority with flexibility to tailor its committee structure in line with its own strategic directions, as well as state and national agendas. For example, syllabus development can continue to be informed by committees that include a wide range of persons with experience and expertise in syllabus and school operations such as discipline experts, teachers and school leaders. Similarly, the tertiary entrance functions of the authority can continue to be informed by representatives of Queensland tertiary institutions.

The new bill will support clear reporting relationships between the authority and the minister. In particular, the bill enables the minister to issue a statement of expectations that will outline key

medium-term priorities and deliverables. This will help to ensure that key expectations are clarified and aligned with available resources.

017 The bill also enables the minister to direct the authority in the exercise of its functions if circumstances arise where it is in the public interest to do so. However, the authority will be independent from direction in key areas such as syllabus content, the approval of school work programs and the certification of individual student achievement. The authority's functions will include:

- developing senior syllabuses and P-10 syllabuses for subjects not covered by the Australian Curriculum;
- developing and accrediting kindergarten guidelines;
- supporting schools and early childhood education and care providers in implementing syllabuses, guidelines and the Australian Curriculum;
- developing and administering prescribed tests and common national tests;
- moderation processes to support comparable school based assessment;
- issuing senior certificates; and
- ranking students for tertiary entrance.

The syllabus functions of the authority focus on the development of Queensland senior syllabuses. Queensland syllabus documents, with consistent content, standards and assessment requirements, will continue as the foundation of senior certification and tertiary entrance. The bill enables the authority to develop, revise or purchase senior syllabuses. In subjects covered by the Australian Curriculum, the bill requires the authority to adopt Australian Curriculum content and standards of achievement as a basis for developing a syllabus. This is consistent with the state's commitment to nationally consistent content and standards of achievement while recognising that some reorganisation of content may be required to align Australian Curriculum content with Queensland assessment processes. Outside of senior syllabuses, which are required for senior certification purposes, the authority will not develop syllabuses in areas covered by the Australian Curriculum. For years P-10, schools and school authorities will access Australian Curriculum content and standards and will determine their own assessment processes.

The bill will give the authority the function to develop a P-10 syllabus in the event that this is required for a subject—for example, a particular language subject—that is not covered under the Australian Curriculum. The bill empowers the QCAA to develop and accredit kindergarten guidelines, which are not included as part of the Australian Curriculum. The new authority will have a specific function to support schools and early childhood education and care providers in implementing syllabuses and kindergarten guidelines that it has developed. Importantly, the bill also provides a clear function to support schools and providers in implementing the Australian Curriculum. The bill empowers the authority to provide resources and professional development to support the implementation of syllabuses, kindergarten guidelines and the Australian Curriculum. The provision of these services and products will be a matter for consideration by the authority in light of school authority requirements and priorities outlined in the ministerial statement of expectations. In this context, I would generally expect that the implementation of new syllabuses and Australian Curriculum subjects would be funded by the authority while ongoing support would be provided on a user-pays basis.

The bill provides a broad testing function covering the development and administration of tests prescribed under a regulation and common national tests. Under this function, the authority will continue to administer and deliver the Queensland Core Skills Test and NAPLAN. The bill also extends the testing function of the authority to include 'recognised schools'. Recognised schools are overseas schools which, under an agreement with the minister, are able to provide Queensland syllabus products. This may, in appropriate cases, enable recognised schools to offer the Queensland Core Skills Test to their students. Clause 14 of the bill provides a moderation function that will support the continued administration of moderation panels and related quality assurance processes to ensure the comparability of school based assessment. The specific processes administered under this function will be subject to the outcomes of the review of Queensland senior assessment and tertiary entrance processes, which will also include consideration of key recommendations arising from the recent parliamentary inquiry into assessment in senior maths and science subjects. It is expected that the broad moderation function outlined in the bill will accommodate any future changes to these processes.

The new authority, like the QSA, will be empowered to issue senior certificates of achievement and statements of results, such as the Queensland Certificate of Education—the QCE—and the senior statement of results. The authority will also manage student accounts to record student learning that may be listed on a senior statement or a QCE. The bill provides the new authority with the function to develop and administer processes to rank students for tertiary entrance. This currently involves the provision of overall position—OP—and field position—FP—ranks to eligible year 12 students. In future, specific processes to be administered under this broad function will be subject to the outcomes of the review of senior assessment and tertiary entrance. The review report is due to be provided by the end of July 2014. The timing of any changes will, however, be carefully considered to ensure that students are able to plan their senior schooling and tertiary entrance pathways.

The bill also enables tertiary entrance ranking processes to be extended to overseas recognised schools. This would allow the new body to offer an equivalent overall position—or equivalent OP—tertiary entrance rank to international students attending recognised schools. This process would not put international students in competition with domestic OP students but would be available for use by tertiary institutions as part of selection decisions applicable to international students. The new authority will be specifically empowered to consider similar requests in relation to international students studying Queensland senior subjects at a recognised school. It is intended that the regulation will determine specific eligibility requirements that will enable the new authority to consider requests by international students on a case-by-case basis in light of issues of practicality, security and cost. The regulation will also include the power to charge for the provision of these services to international students.

The bill clarifies the new authority's capacity to commercially develop its own intellectual property by providing a specific commercialisation power. The government strongly supports emerging opportunities to market and promote high-quality educational products and services to international schools and students. However, supporting the commercialisation of the authority's products and services does not reflect an intention to charge Queensland schools and school students for the provision of core syllabus and curriculum products. The Australian Skills Quality Authority, ASQA, is responsible for the registration of training providers. Since 2012 ASQA has delegated responsibility for registering and auditing school based training providers to the QSA. The new authority will assume a similar function to exercise delegated responsibility for school based training providers in Queensland, and this is supported by the three schooling sectors.

The bill provides the QCAA with a number of additional functions, including research to support the effective and efficient exercise of its functions and informing the public about matters relevant to its functions. This bill supports transformative change with the creation of a robust new statutory entity with strong corporate governance and clear functions that reflect our changing educational landscape. It reflects this government's commitment to reducing duplication, providing better services to customers and meeting contemporary needs of Queensland students and their families with a high-quality education to meet the needs of all Queensland students and their families. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. JH LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Minister for Education, Training and Employment) (12.17 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to the Education and Innovation Committee

Madam SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education and Innovation Committee.

~~NATURE CONSERVATION AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL~~ ~~(NO. 2)~~

~~Resumed from 20 August (see p. 2607).~~