



Speech By  
**Michael Pucci**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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## **EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES BILL**

 **Mr PUCCI** (Logan—LNP) (7.50 pm): I rise today to contribute briefly to the debate in favour of the Education and Care Services Bill 2013. Although my contribution will be brief today, the House knows that as a former member of the Education and Innovation Committee I like to speak on all things relating to education, so I want to mention a few things about the bill today.

The delivery of education is an essential element in the development of our youth and the future potential that our great state can achieve. Education care providers in Logan maintain a high standard that is respected throughout our community. To better aid them in the course of their duties, the removal of unnecessary red tape has to occur. Our government is unashamedly removing the bureaucratic entanglements that have strangled not only the educational services of our state, but almost every department and functionary of government and business.

The majority of early childhood education and care services are regulated under national law which came into effect on 1 January 2012. Approximately 2,500 Queensland services are regulated under the national law; however, a range of early childhood education and care services continue to be regulated under the Queensland Child Care Act 2002, the CCA. Currently 66 of these services continue to be licensed under the CCA. This has resulted in Queensland having two very different legislative frameworks for its early childhood education and care services.

The dual regulatory system has created additional complexities for licensees and providers who manage services captured by the different pieces of legislation. In order to reduce confusion and red tape, this bill has been developed to replace the CCA. The bill seeks to minimise complexity and cost for providers, though it also aligns with the national law where appropriate while also retaining key elements of the act. The 66 services still licensed under the CCA are generally smaller scale services which provide early childhood education and care for the particular needs of their local communities. In many instances, these are the only early childhood education and care services available to the community. They include: limited hours care services in receipt of Queensland government funding; Commonwealth budget based funded services not in receipt of the Commonwealth Child Care Benefit scheme; occasional care services and early childhood education and care services that are also disability services under the Disability Services Act 2006. Due to their unique nature and operating environment, it is not feasible to apply the national law to these services; accordingly, the bill will retain a regulatory framework which complements the national law without increasing the regulatory burden on these services. It is also necessary to progress this bill as the Child Care Regulation 2003 is due to expire, and it is appropriate to review the act and regulation now.

Stakeholders supported the development of new legislation in response to a March 2011 regulatory assessment statement. An explanatory paper and draft bill were made publicly available in April 2013, with various stakeholders directly consulted on the proposed legislation. During these consultations, stakeholders confirmed their support for the hybrid approach and the bill. In particular,

stakeholders were supportive of the introduction of an 'exceptional circumstances' approval to enable services to quickly relocate to alternative premises in an event such as a natural disaster.

Stakeholders were supportive of the perpetual approval system and the retention of the Child Care Act's educator-child ratios. Once approved, an approved provider will pay an annual fee for each service they operate rather than submit and pay for reapproval every three years. To ensure that the quality of service is maintained, the bill provides for a minimum of three yearly inspections of each service. This is consistent with the requirements of the CCA.

One of the changes in the bill further reduces the number of directors liability provisions from 15, as originally proposed, to eight. This is a significant reduction when compared to the Child Care Act 2002, which contains more than 50 directors liability provisions.

As always, I commend the efforts of the Education and Innovation Committee and their staff on their continued commitment and professionalism in reviewing legislative reforms that will no doubt benefit Queenslanders for generations to come. I also commend the honourable Minister for Education, Training and Employment and his ministerial and staff who, over the past year and a half, have delivered great reforms and improvements to the delivery of education across Queensland which ensure that we remain a great state with great opportunities. I commend the bill to the House.