



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.52 pm): It is my pleasure to rise in the House tonight to speak in support of this bill, the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. I want to quote from the chair's foreword in the committee report where the chair, the member for Nudgee, sums up the intent of this bill fairly well. She states—

This Bill presents an opportunity to recognise high performing school teachers across Queensland and encourage them to continue their role in the classroom. Quality teachers are at the very heart of maintaining a high quality education system in this state. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant contribution that teachers make each and every day and thank them for their continued service in this regard.

I also note the comments of the member for Townsville. He summed it up quite simply when he said, 'This is about keeping great teachers in our classrooms,' and he is absolutely right. It would be remiss of me in the context of that comment to not recognise some incredibly outstanding teachers in my own electorate. I have 18 schools in my electorate. It is not quite the 58 that the member for Gregory has, but nonetheless it does keep me quite busy at the end of the year with school graduations and end-of-year functions.

I am incredibly proud of the local schools in the Southport electorate. I have to acknowledge some outstanding people—people like Nigel Hughes, the principal at Southport State High School, who is an exemplary leader and so committed to leading a school that just a few years ago was a school of 900 and now is rapidly approaching 2,000. To lead that school as he has and to achieve the OP results that we have seen from that school in the last couple of years, along with its growth and managing new classrooms and all the other challenges that come with growth, he is an incredible leader.

I also want to acknowledge Taylor Haley at Southport State School. This school is a particular passion of mine. It is the school I went to as a child. Every year since I have been an elected member of parliament it has been my great honour to speak at the badge presentation ceremony at the start of the year and then again at the end of the year when the year 6 students—or the year 7 students as they were in the past—graduate. Every year it is one of those moments where the principal always says, 'By the way, parents, I should let you know that the member for Southport actually went to this school as a child.'

There are some other great teachers like Rachel Cutajar, who has just this year taken over the reins at Bellevue Park State School. She is indeed a great example of the sorts of teachers that this bill is referring to. She has come out of a deputy's position at Southport State High School. She has now moved into her own school, albeit she has gone from high school to primary school. She is doing an absolutely outstanding job at the primary school this year but has previously been an amazing leader. She has so much empathy and passion to make a difference in the lives of young people.

The list goes on. I am concerned about the time because there are other things I want to address. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge Mark Rickard, the principal at Benowa State High School—another outstanding school both in terms of its immersion programs, its arts and its academia—and Michael Josey, the principal at Benowa State School. It was such a thrill to be there with one of the

classes a couple of weeks ago for a mock parliament. I was invited by the class to observe their mock parliament. They had appointed a Speaker, a premier and an opposition leader. To talk to the kids about how parliament operates was such a special occasion. I should acknowledge Jess Whitworth, the teacher who invited me. She is a very good friend but also a very committed teacher.

I have to mention Keebra Park State High School. Adam Brandis, the principal, has been there three years now. Sadly we had a succession of different principals through the school after Fran Jones left after an absolutely stellar year, winning eisteddfods and leading one of the best sporting schools in the nation. Adam has come in and taken a very strong position with that school, and the turnaround at Keebra Park State High School has been absolutely outstanding. I know he would not forgive me if I did not mention particularly just how well the school is now doing in cultural and science programs, as well as its prowess on the field in both Rugby Union and Rugby League and not just on the Gold Coast. The teams have won national championships on many occasions.

The school has a great football heritage, as I know well because, as the first student to enrol at Keebra Park in 1973, I had the privilege of being led by a remarkable principal Garfield Prowse. At his funeral a few years ago—and I was honoured to be invited to speak on behalf of the students of the school many years later—one of his former colleagues spoke about his time as a principal, and it was then that I found out that he was considered an absolute innovator in his day. He was considered somewhat controversial as a principal in his day, but the legacy that he achieved in the way that he led that school from its opening day to then over the first 20 years of its life was remarkable. Some great people have come out of that school. Our current deputy police commissioner for the southern region, Brian Wilkins, was one of my school mates at Keebra Park, and the current Chief of the Australian Navy is also a former student from Keebra Park.

I am worried I am running out of time here. I want to acknowledge Susan Christensen, the Principal of Southport Special School. What a special person she is and what an incredible team of people they are. Julie-Anne McGuinness is the Principal of Musgrave Hill. She has been there a few years now. That is the school where my boys and I sang the school song at graduation nights for 17 consecutive years, because each of my four boys went through that school. What an amazing little school that has been.

I want to acknowledge Karen Brown, the Principal of Ashmore State School. This is now I think her second year in the role. She has been like a breath of fresh air. She is very committed and very passionate about the work there and very committed to student outcomes. It gets overlooked but the Queensland Academies school is also tucked away in the back of my electorate, and I want to acknowledge Principal Vanessa Rebgetz.