



## ***EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE***

**Members present:**

Mrs LM Linard MP (Chair)  
Mr N Dametto MP  
Mr MP Healy MP  
Mr BM Saunders MP  
Mrs JA Stuckey MP  
Mrs SM Wilson MP

**Staff present:**

Ms S Cawcutt (Committee Secretary)  
Ms M Coorey (Assistant Committee Secretary)

### **PUBLIC HEARING—INQUIRY INTO THE EDUCATION (QUEENSLAND COLLEGE OF TEACHERS) AMENDMENT BILL 2019**

#### **TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2019**

**Brisbane**

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### **The committee met at 11.01 am.**

**CHAIR:** I now declare open this public hearing for the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee's inquiry into the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. My name is Leanne Linard. I am the member for Nudgee and chair of the committee. The members present today are Mrs Jann Stuckey, the member for Currumbin and deputy chair; Mr Bruce Saunders, the member for Maryborough; Mrs Simone Wilson, the member for Pumicestone; Mr Michael Healy, the member for Cairns; and Mr Nick Dametto, the member for Hinchinbrook. The committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on the parliament's website.

The purpose of this public hearing is to hear evidence from stakeholders who made submissions as part of the committee's inquiry into the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019. The bill was referred to the committee on 12 February this year. The committee must report to parliament by 28 March. The program for today's hearing has been published on the committee's web page.

### **GILES, Dr Paul, Assistant Secretary, Independent Education Union of Australia, Queensland and Northern Territory Branch**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. Would you like to open with some comments? We have received your written submission.

**Dr Giles:** Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission. We represent 17,000 members across Queensland and the Northern Territory in the non-government sector of education. We represent teachers and other employees in the non-government sector of education. In our submission we made a number of points. Essentially, we were strongly supportive of the initiative of HAT and lead teacher in education. We acknowledge the fact that there are many teachers who deserve that acknowledgement and that classification as a highly accomplished teacher and a lead teacher. In that submission we also highlighted the fact that we regard the Queensland College of Teachers as a very suitable accrediting authority for HAT and lead teacher, given their role within education and given the fact that the vast majority of teachers teaching in Queensland schools are, in fact, registered with the Queensland College of Teachers and meet the particular initiatives and standards of that college.

We did raise one issue that I will make reference to. In point 3 in our submission we note that currently Independent Schools Queensland is an accrediting authority accrediting teachers in the independent sector. We note that the Queensland College of Teachers legislation was largely restricted to or totally restricted to teachers in the government sector and teachers who are affiliated with the Queensland Catholic Education Commission. Our concern there is that it was limiting in the sense that there would be teachers and schools not affiliated with ISQ that may seek also to have acknowledgement of HAT and lead teachers. We put a submission to you that there needed to be an amendment made for an inclusion that allowed employing authorities for a school accredited under the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 to be also represented by the College of Teachers. That was put to you in our submission. Obviously, you have that and you are aware of it. Essentially it was the intent of our submission that that be included and that there would also be some subsequent changes made in regard to the power of the QCT so that they also have a position of accepting and deciding certification applications by teachers and renewal applications by teachers, so that they would have a role that they could exercise across the independent sector as well. That was largely our submission.

One other issue that has arisen since that—we did not include it in our submission as we became aware of it after that—is the fact that this proposed legislation for the College of Teachers would be limited largely to teachers in state schools and also teachers within the Queensland Catholic Education Commission, but there are, in fact, many fully Queensland College of Teachers registered early childhood teachers in the early childhood sector who are not affiliated with QCEC or the ISQ

and, currently, this proposed legislation would not give them access to HAT and lead teacher accreditation. There are, in fact, over 500 of those sites across Queensland. We think that is an issue that needs to be brought up and addressed by the proposed legislation as well. Essentially, that is it from us: the two points that we have made specifically in regard to the coverage that the QCT would actually have and their right to accredit highly accomplished and lead teachers.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much for those opening comments. I appreciate that you did not duplicate your submission. Thank you for adding value to what you have provided. We appreciate that. I have two quick points for clarification. Your submission is straightforward, and thank you clarifying your support for what is proposed. In point 3 of your submission, the comment is that the status of teachers in independent schools remains unclear. My original comment would be that the bill is quite clear in regard to the fact that they would not be able to access what is proposed because they have that system under ISQ. You made the comment that there would be schools not represented by them.

**Dr Giles:** My understanding is that ISQ is a peak body that schools subscribe to on an annual basis. It is my understanding that there would be schools that would not be members of ISQ.

**CHAIR:** Are you aware of any independent schools that are not members of ISQ?

**Dr Giles:** Off the top of my head, no. That is something that you could follow up with ISQ.

**CHAIR:** They are coming in today, so we will.

**Dr Giles:** It would be my understanding that on an annual basis you subscribe to become a member and that there would schools that are not members of ISQ or that may not be financial members from year to year, and they would be in a difficult or a different situation in that sort of context.

**CHAIR:** We will ask about. I was a little confused by the issue in point 4 in regard to chapter 2A of the bill itself. There is some concern over whether the wording or the drafting is sufficiently clear. On my reading of it, it is. Are you still raising that as a relevant point?

**Dr Giles:** I think it is clear if there is no change to the position in the beginning. We had suggested that there be an amendment to the bill that included an added part that says an employing authority for a school accredited under the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act be included on page 17. Subsequently we thought that if that was to occur there would need to be that variation on page 13, so that it actually said—if I can find it—

**CHAIR:** I think it was the inclusion of the word 'teachers'. I wanted to clarify it, because new section 230B(2) does clearly state, 'Without limiting subsection (1)'.

**Dr Giles:** It states—

Without limiting subsection (1), the college's functions include the following—

- (a) deciding certification applications ...

We added that it should also include 'accepting and deciding certification applications'.

**CHAIR:** Because you felt that chapter 2A was not sufficiently clear in that regard?

**Dr Giles:** We felt that if the variation was added that we included in the beginning, that would be necessary to make it valid—that they would also be accepting applications directly.

**CHAIR:** It would not be the first time that drafters would have differing views about whether or not the clarity is there.

**Dr Giles:** We thought that if the variation occurred that we suggested in the beginning this would be a contingent change that would be necessary.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Those were the only points of clarification that I was seeking.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** The Department of Education has responded to the submissions that were put in. The committee only recently passed publication of that. Have you had a chance to have a look?

**Dr Giles:** I did not. I have a copy. I received it late last night, I think it was, or late yesterday afternoon.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I was wondering what your comments might be in response to the department's response to your inquiries.

**Dr Giles:** At this stage I cannot make any comments about that, because I have not been able to—

**Mrs STUCKEY:** If you had some, would you be happy to write to the committee and let us know whether you find that acceptable, whether you think it could be further amended or whatever? That would be helpful.

**Dr Giles:** We are certainly happy to do that.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I would also be interested to know what sort of consultation your union had with the department and government about the drafting of this bill.

**Dr Giles:** In the actual drafting of the legislation?

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Or discussions around the bill.

**Dr Giles:** We have not had a lot. To be honest, I am not aware of any. I certainly have not had any direct discussions with anybody other than to say to the Queensland College of Teachers that we support them taking on the role, because we do see it as a significant impact on schools in Queensland and their role as being very significant in taking on that function. Actually on the legislation, I am not aware of any consultation that we have had.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** We thank you very much for your submission.

**Mr HEALY:** Dr Giles, thanks for your submission. It was informative. I am interested in something you may have answered: what do teachers think of this? Are you getting some good feedback?

**Dr Giles:** In regard to HAT and lead teacher, yes, very good feedback in the sense that teachers are embracing it.

**Mr HEALY:** These are the people who will be impacted, so I am always keen to find out how they feel about it.

**Dr Giles:** Yes, they are. Realistically, they are seeing it as an innovation. They are not sure of the depth and demands it will place on them. A lot of teachers who are very experienced and have been out there a long time have stayed in the classroom because they want to be teachers in the classroom, dealing with kids. This is a way that they see as being acknowledged for what they are doing and the skills and the abilities they have achieved over a significant period.

It is being taken on very strongly, I think. People are happy to embrace it. I am not sure that they realise the rigour that is associated with it, because it is a very rigorous process and a very demanding process. Certainly I think a lot of the teachers in the non-government sector particularly are up to taking it on and achieving HAT and lead teacher.

My real concern, and the one that I need to highlight again, is the fact that early childhood teachers are registered teachers in Queensland with the College of Teachers and AITSL, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, make reference to them being able to take on becoming HAT and lead teacher and going through the process. However, if the legislation is to proceed as it is, those teachers who are registered teachers with the Queensland College of Teachers and are out there practising in the early childhood sector would not be able to access HAT and lead teacher. I think that is a significant issue to be addressed.

**Mr HEALY:** Well raised. Thank you for that.

**Mrs WILSON:** Dr Giles, touching on what you were just saying about the early childhood teachers, out of those 500 sites do you have any idea how many teachers are members of your union?

**Dr Giles:** Each site would have at least a teacher, so there would be potentially 500 teachers there who could seek to access it. I am not sure of the number we have as members. Certainly, it is a significant number.

**Mr DAMETTO:** Thank you, Dr Giles, for coming along today and for your submission. I am supportive of anything we can do to help with the remuneration of good teachers and to keep them in the classroom. Are you at all concerned about the powers handed over to the Queensland College of Teachers doing the sole accreditation for this?

**Dr Giles:** They are not going to have sole accreditation, because ISQ has that role as well. We do not see an issue with that. The process through AITSL to become an accredited assessor is quite rigorous. Somebody who becomes an assessor has gone through a significant process themselves, and there is a process in place to become a HAT and lead teacher that is monitored, if you like, or certainly directed by AITSL in the sense that these are the steps and these are the things that you have to go through. No, I do not see a problem with the QCT taking on that role, because I think the structures are in place and the processes to be accredited are very rigorous and very—I am not going to say 'foolproof', but certainly very strongly representative of the profession. To get it, you are going to have to be a good teacher, essentially.

**Mr DAMETTO:** Thank you very much for clearing that up for me. I appreciate it.

**CHAIR:** There being no further questions, Dr Giles, on behalf of the committee I thank you and your organisation for your written submission and also for taking the time to come and raise issues which really assist the committee when we are looking at these sorts of bills. Best of luck to your members.

**Dr Giles:** Thank you.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I just wanted to check whether Dr Giles would see fit to respond to the comments from the department?

**Dr Giles:** Yes, we will. We will make those available.

**CHAIR:** My apologies. There was a question on notice.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** It was not on notice; it was an invitation.

**CHAIR:** Yes, an invitation to provide any further comments.

**ROBERTSON, Mr David, Executive Director, Independent Schools Queensland**

**WISE, Ms Josephine, Director, Education Services, Independent Schools Queensland**

**CHAIR:** I now welcome representatives from Independent Schools Queensland. Thank you very much for your submission. You would have heard Dr Giles before you, so you will know some of the questions coming your way. Would you like to make an opening statement and then we will ask questions.

**Mr Robertson:** I represent Independent Schools Queensland, which is the peak body for independent schooling—a sector comprising 210 schools enrolling 122,000 students. My colleague with me is Jo Wise, the director of education services. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today.

We do not have any issues with this bill, which provides for the Queensland College of Teachers to become a nationally recognised certifying authority for highly accomplished and lead teachers. I think we all recognise the importance of the quality of teaching and its impact on student outcomes. Any initiative that recognises highly accomplished and lead teachers is welcomed. In fact, teachers who do receive this certification will have clearly demonstrated that they have met the highest professional standards.

ISQ has long recognised the importance of this certification process. We became a nationally recognised certifying authority under the auspices of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership in 2017. We are currently the only recognised certifying authority in Queensland. However, we very much look forward to the Queensland College of Teachers also taking on that role.

The certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers has been very successful in the independent sector. Since 2017, 13 teachers have been certified as lead and 15 as highly accomplished. This year we will be assessing 39 applicants from 13 schools. There are 54 applicants from 19 schools who will be assessed in 2020. In the context of national figures, they are quite large. I think there are only 400-odd recognised teachers across Australia. We have taken a lead in this.

It is a rigorous process, as we have just heard. It does require a very significant commitment by teachers over an 18-month period. It has been highly welcomed by independent schools and their teachers.

We have recently released the results of a research project to evaluate the impact of highly accomplished and lead teachers which was undertaken for us in association with the Queensland University of Technology. It is a very positive report. I am happy to table a copy of that report for the information of the committee today.

**CHAIR:** That would be lovely, thank you.

**Mr Robertson:** As I mentioned earlier, we do not have any concerns with the bill. We look forward to working collaboratively with the Queensland College of Teachers should they become a certifying authority. Again, I thank you for the opportunity to present. We are happy to take any questions.

**CHAIR:** You have partly addressed my first question, which was how many applications you have received since 2017. Could you run through those numbers again? You said there are 13 lead and 15 highly accomplished. What were the total applications that led to that? It would be interesting to get a sense of how many successful applications are progressing through the system?

**Ms Wise:** I can give a rough estimate. I do not have the figures with me. We lose about 10 per cent before they apply and another 10 per cent through the process. That is the average. A number of teachers self-select out and do not complete the stage 1 submission. Then we have about five to 10 per cent who are not successful on their way through that first stage. We only have a very small number—only one teacher so far—who has been unsuccessful at stage 2. The certification process has two stages—a portfolio submission and then a site visit where you observe them teaching and speak to colleagues.

**CHAIR:** That is very low. Do you credit that to teachers who are seeking this sort of recognition being very well versed in where they are at or is it that you are also—which is an opportunity for you to blow your own horn—doing great professional development around what people should expect realistically if they want to be successful?

**Mr Robertson:** I think the latter. Teachers are well aware of the process and the rigour. We also work with principals. Obviously the teacher is collaborating with the principal. Clearly the nature of the certification process means that not every teacher is going to put their hand up.

**Ms Wise:** We have also engaged in a process which is a little bit outside the required guidelines. We do significant training with in-school mentors, so a person who is applying has someone on-site who understands the process and they will be supported through the process. That is not a requirement of the national guidelines, but it is something that we believe has enabled us to scale this and work it really quickly alongside direct and specific training and support of principals, because that is also a key element to ensuring a teacher's success through the process.

The third thing we are doing a little bit differently—again, not required by the guidelines to do—is encouraging schools not to have one teacher at a time go through the process but potentially two or three. It creates a professional learning community and they can support each other. Again, we think that is an initiative that has made a big difference.

**CHAIR:** Can you speak to the issue raised by Dr Giles before you came to the table? Is it the case that independent schools elect to pay an annual fee?

**Mr Robertson:** Yes, that is correct. We are a voluntary membership organisation; however, every independent school in Queensland is a member. In my nearly too long there—17 years—that has been the case. I will mention that as an organisation we have for many, many years played a role in administering government programs—state government and Commonwealth government programs—and we undertake that work for any school. It is not dependent on membership. It would be the same case here. If there were a case of an independent school that chose not to join our association, we would welcome them to use our certification process.

**CHAIR:** I am interested in your comments on page 3 with regard to the review process. Obviously the bill has a review process which would proceed, on the decision as well as procedure, to QCAT I think is what is proposed. Your process does not. Can you extrapolate on both of those points?

**Ms Wise:** When we first became a certifying authority we referred to guidelines that have been updated by AITSL since 2017. The initial certification guidelines really encouraged all of the authorities to make the review process about the certification process, not about the outcome. That is the decision we have made. We have a process that uses our governing structure, through our board, to be our head of power for those conversations. Obviously to date we have not experienced any concerns. Before that we have an internal process, whereby if somebody wants to raise a grievance we have a blind second-round assessment. There are various stages where a teacher has an opportunity to have the situation challenged.

We are very comfortable with the QCT's approach. We think it is in line with their legislation and their requirements. It is just pointing out that there is a slight difference when it comes to the appeals process for teachers.

**CHAIR:** Just to clarify, you are very comfortable with the proposal that any appeals would go through QCAT? You do not feel there is a need for specialist knowledge? You feel that they would be the right agency to consider such appeals? What is your view in that regard, if you have one?

**Mr Robertson:** Given the Queensland College of Teachers is a statutory authority, I think that is the normal process for government agencies—for appeals to go to QCAT. In that regard, I would have thought that is appropriate.

**Ms Wise:** As I understand it, the internal review committee of the QCT would be the first port of call. While it would be a significant responsibility and potentially quite a large workload if there were a large number of concerns for that committee, I imagine that QCT would be able to manage that.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Between you, you have covered what I was going to ask as well. I was wondering what level of engagement or consultation you had with the department leading up to the drafting of the bill.

**Mr Robertson:** As with all legislation that impacts on independent schools, I think we would describe the level of engagement and consultation as very high. I am not sure that we saw a draft of the bill, as we might do in some cases. I do not see that as a limitation in terms of the consultation process.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Do you have any feedback around the cost of the application process and obviously the gap that will be there as well?

**Mr Robertson:** It is obviously quite an expensive process because of the rigour and nature of it. We have fees, as will QCT. It is hard to assess, on an individual basis, whether the fee covers the full cost. It will depend where the teacher is located, particularly those teachers in rural and regional areas.

In our sector it really is a decision for the employer. Some schools will pay the fee on behalf of the employee and others may not. The independent sector has slightly more flexibility in terms of how those costs are met.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I raised the issue with the department about an applicant paying the first fee and being unsuccessful as far as proceeding. I was told that generally they would succeed so people would not lose \$800 or so in the first instance. Do you have any views on the staging of process—the likelihood that a teacher who applies would be successful and not knocked out in the first round and lose that money?

**Mr Robertson:** I hope that is not the process, because that would defeat the professional nature of it. As we have stated previously, we have lead-up processes which would mean that every teacher is not going to put up their hand; it would be teachers who clearly are committed. Therefore, you would expect most would get through stage 1.

**Ms Wise:** We are conscious of that as a risk, so we have staged our payments so that there is that ability not to lose the entire fee if you are unsuccessful at stage 1. We also have a small administrative fee at application which enables that person to access all the preliminary training. We find it is at that point that people self-select out, so they lose only a small administrative fee rather than go all the way through to stage 1 submission. We try really hard to engage teachers quite directly early so that they make that decision wisely.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** You have that small administration fee. What sort of support would you be able to offer, then, if somebody were unsuccessful after stage 1? I understand it is probably quite an unusual occurrence.

**Ms Wise:** Given we are a small sector and because the numbers so far have been quite small for us to manage, we work really hard with that individual to make a good decision about what comes next. In some instances, it has just been a situation where someone is having a baby or they have received a promotion and so continuing does not make sense to them at that time. We have had people who have been ill so we have made provisions. We have been particularly flexible to the individual teacher. We have a strong view that this is a teacher led, value-add experience so we try very hard to tailor the response.

We also work closely with the principal or the representative of the employer in that case because we have to make sure that we are representing their particular views as well. One of the reasons we work so closely with principals is that we do not want to people saying, 'You are not able to be certified at this time because you do not have the experience,' for example, or 'you have not had the opportunities.' Working with principals is another way we make sure that teachers who are coming to the process understand what is required of them.

**Mr Robertson:** I would also say that this certification process does fit into our broader range of programs that we provide to schools around our program we call Great Teachers in Independent Schools. We have a professional growth tool where teachers assess themselves against the professional standard. We have all sorts of PD and services for schools. It is almost part of a broader package. That is a very strong justification for us to do the certification, because schools can then plan that as part of an ongoing process around professional development for all of their teachers.

**Mr HEALY:** It sounds like quite an arduous and lengthy task. Can you give us a brief indication of the process? Everyone has busy lives with lots of things happening. My sister is a teacher, and I know that her hours are phenomenal.

**Ms Wise:** It is a tension between creating a process that is professionally rigorous enough so that it is seen to be highly valued—becoming certified is a particularly significant step in your professionalism—and being realistic about the work conditions, which again is why we work so closely with principals who have applicants, to make sure they are supported through the process. We talk about the time it takes. Depending on where they are at in their career, individuals will take different amounts of time. As a ballpark figure, we talk about a two-hour investment a week of your contact week, so about two hours per 40 weeks. If you do not do two hours in one week, somewhere along the line you are going to need to spend that time. It is a deep reflection on your practice. You need to gather evidence of your impact on student achievement and also on your colleagues. That is the part where teachers need to spend a bit more time than they would normally, we think, because you do not normally run surveys past your colleagues to say, 'Did my support of your work in that area make a difference? Can you tell me more about that?' There is potentially a bit of new reflection that happens for teachers in the process.



**Mr SAUNDERS:** It is good that independent schools are financially helping teachers, because ultimately schools will benefit because of the better levels of education. Do schools give them any time to do this? Is there any free time?

**Ms Wise:** Again, that depends on the employer and the context of the school. In a small school environment that could be quite challenging. We encourage schools to find time, and typically they do. It might be relief every third assembly, or it might be that every second staff meeting they can work on their application. We have found in our schools' cases that they have been very willing to accommodate. This is such a significant professional investment that we also recommend they are potentially relieved from other than compulsory training—any other training that the school may be running. We suggest that they relieve them so they can work on this. So far that seems to have been appropriate.

**CHAIR:** Are there any concurrent or parallel systems to this, like maybe exemplary teachers in the Anglican system? Can you speak to that?

**Mr Robertson:** Yes. Various independent schools, including systems and groups of schools, may have classifications of teachers in their EBAs. The Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association have two categories at the top of their scale which I think they may call exemplary teachers or something of that kind. Those schools will generally have their own processes as to how they assess teachers into those positions. Other schools would have rewards programs that might include additional pay, support for further study, study tours, research et cetera. There certainly would be a variety of mechanisms within the sector.

One of the key things about the nationally certified process is that it is portable across schools. All of those things that individual schools do are great, but they only apply to that school. If someone moves from that school they do not take that qualification with them.

**CHAIR:** Have you had any discussions with those schools that have their own internal systems about how that system might work in conjunction with this? Perhaps one might be more attractive than another. What is the feedback?

**Mr Robertson:** This has obviously been formalised since 2017, so I think it is fair to say that a lot of schools are still considering it. There is increasing interest in the sector. I think schools would recognise the importance of portability and the national status of this. Schools will make decisions about their own internal processes, but I would expect that over time the majority of independent schools will engage with this process.

**CHAIR:** Arguably a teacher could choose to engage with this process and then understandably, if they get through the rigorous process—I understand exemplary teachers is also a rigorous process—they can seek certification independently, and you would assume they would want to go back to their employer. I am not asking for hypotheticals, but I would imagine that has been—

**Mr Robertson:** In theory, they could. Again, as Jo has pointed out, we work very closely with principals and schools to encourage and support that. A person could certainly do it on their own, but we would not recommend that.

**CHAIR:** Is that because you feel the sector should move forward as a whole?

**Mr Robertson:** No, it is about the broader professional development of the process for the individual and how they fit and are supported by the school in particular to do the task. Can I make one comment on the early childhood issue that was raised:

**CHAIR:** Yes, please.

**Mr Robertson:** From our perspective, many independent schools have early childhood services on their site, so they are an employer. If they are a registered teacher they would be eligible to apply through our certification process.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Thank you for coming along today. We appreciate your assistance.

**MacKENZIE, Ms Nina, Principal Policy Adviser, Queensland Catholic Education Commission**

**PERRY, Dr Lee-Anne AM, Executive Director, Queensland Catholic Education Commission**

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much for being with us this morning and thank you for the written submission. Of course the Catholic Education Commission, like those submitters before you, always very generously gives its time to contribute to these inquiries. I will give you the opportunity, Dr Perry, to make an opening statement.

**Dr Perry:** Thanks very much, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to make a submission and appear before the committee this morning. I would like to introduce my colleague Nina MacKenzie, who is the principal policy officer at the QCEC. She has had lead of this particular project since she started. She walked into this project, so she has been there from the ground up for us.

QCEC is the peak strategic body with statewide responsibilities for Catholic schooling in Queensland, so our submission is provided on behalf of the five diocese and Catholic school authorities and 17 religious institutions and other incorporated bodies which between them operate a total of 306 Catholic schools that educate more than 147,000 students in Queensland.

QCEC supports the bill to enable the Queensland College of Teachers to perform the role of certifying authority for the certification of highly accomplished and lead teachers in Queensland Catholic schools and teachers in Queensland state schools against the National Professional Standards for Teachers. QCT is a known entity for teachers in Queensland Catholic schools and has the required expertise, knowledge and infrastructure to manage and deliver the certification process.

While our submission raises two issues for the committee to note—and we are happy to answer any questions with regard to them—we do not want to see the passage of the legislation delayed, and I therefore reiterate our support for the bill. I am happy to take any questions.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Dr Perry. Can I go straight to—as you would expect—one of the issues you raised with regard to the revocation of such certification. Could you provide a situation where you would want to revoke certification but registration would not be cancelled?

**Dr Perry:** There are very rare situations. Raising the question of revocation is not in anticipation that it would need to be used very often, but it should be given consideration. As you probably know, the bar to have your registration cancelled as a teacher is quite high—and understandably so—but there are other behaviours and conduct which can occur which would lead one to question whether someone should hold the certification of highly accomplished or lead teacher. There are occasions when teachers behave—and I would expect it would usually be around behavioural incident, a conduct incident—in a way which would make one question whether they were suitable to hold certification, and therefore the status that comes with being a highly accomplished or lead teacher, but that would not meet the threshold for suspension of their teacher registration, so we have raised that as an issue.

I have had the chance to read the department's response to that. We raised it, as you would have seen, during our consultation processes. The department has given the responses that it has. We note that it is not an easy issue to resolve. We note that it is not currently in the AITSL guidelines, but with our colleagues we intend to raise it with AITSL because we do believe it is a provision that should be there. Our EB8, which is our current industrial agreement, makes reference to the possibility of revocation and that the revocation be done by the certifying authority. Because QCT—assuming this all goes through—will be the certifying authority, they are the ones who will award the certification; therefore, they are the only ones who can revoke the certification. The employer cannot revoke the certification.

**CHAIR:** Were you comfortable that a reasonable response was provided by the department? Given this has been coming from a push for some sense of national consistency in the system, were you comfortable that it would also come at a national level and national agreement?

**Dr Perry:** Yes. It is always nice to be the lead in something. I guess we wanted to make mention of it. We do think it is an issue. Because of where we are up to in our processes and because we think it is a low risk—but a risk—we do not think it is of such urgency that it should delay the passage of this legislation, so we are comfortable with referring it through AITSL. We will advocate, and I think we will have support from some of our Queensland colleagues about raising it with AITSL to address that issue. We are comfortable that it is not finalised now. I just wanted the committee to note that it is something we think should at some point be addressed.

**CHAIR:** I have no doubt that you will not let it go away, Dr Perry—

**Dr Perry:** We will not let it go away.

**CHAIR:**—until you raise it in those forums.

**Dr Perry:** I note the department's responses. I am not sure that it is going to be as straightforward as simply ceasing to pay a person. If they have the certification I think that would lead to industrial complications. If someone is certified, therefore they attract the payment that comes with that. To then not pay them when they are certified, because it has not been revoked, I do not think is a solution that is available to employers. I think the solution will be working with AITSL to have it included in the guidelines and then to have a national approach to it.

**CHAIR:** Dr Perry, thank very much.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I want to refer back to your submission, and thank you for that. You made mention of the costs involved and the application fees, which are significant. There is a reason for that. Are there concerns that will be a barrier at all?

**Dr Perry:** I think it is always a concern when there is a fee barrier associated with it. A usual approach in Catholic schools is that one takes a pastoral approach, and I cannot see that this would be any different. In the context of costs for professional development or professional enhancement processes, for example, if a teacher chose to do a postgraduate qualification—this cost is not huge in comparison to if you were doing a masters course, for example—in some cases they would probably need to be making some choices to do this and not to do some other professional courses which also incur a cost, so they may need to make some choices there. In saying that, I think if there were instances where it was actually a barrier and a teacher simply felt they could not go forward, they would have that conversation with their employer to see what support they may be able to provide.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** There is also the fact that the application fee does not cover the full cost. What are your thoughts around that gap?

**Dr Perry:** It is a reality, which is why we wanted to note it. The cost that the teacher will pay does not meet the full cost of the process and the shortfall will have to be made up by employers. Employers will have to make a financial contribution to this process. It is a reality. If I could be so bold as to say that when you have a process that is developed by a national body in isolation and it is not an employing authority, they develop a process which then employing authorities and other bodies have to implement and there is a disconnect, so we are all left to work within the reality that is there.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Do you have any idea what that amount might be?

**Ms MacKenzie:** Our calculations have been based around the teacher relief fee for our assessors. There are two assessors assigned to each application—two assessors at stage 1. If a teacher progresses to stage 2, one of the assessors will undertake classroom observation. That may include travel and accommodation to some of our more remote schools outside of the south-east corner. Also, that second assessor will then come in at stage 2 and together they will write their report and make their recommendations to the certifying authority. Our approximate estimate is \$500 per day per assessor if they are a teacher in the school. It could take up to five days of teacher time to undertake an assessment. We are talking five times \$500, which is more than \$1,500.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Will that also then require a replacement teacher while a teacher is being assessed, or is that happening while they are teaching? Does the five days that we have just talked about take the teacher out of the class, so you would then need a supplementary teacher?

**Ms MacKenzie:** It will at times take the teacher out of the classroom, and that is the payment to cover the teacher being out of the classroom—to pay for their replacement teacher.

**Dr Perry:** That is actually the big cost that is there. The assessors in many cases are classroom teachers, because you want them to be current practising teachers. Therefore they have to be released. Therefore they have to have a replacement. That is where the cost comes and then there are the incidentals, which are not necessarily insignificant in remote areas—the travel and accommodation which goes with that as well. There are costs, and the employers who are very committed to this process will need to bear that cost. It is worth noting, because it is a cost that will not go down and potentially will go up. Because the big component of that is teacher cost, as the cost of teachers goes up then the cost of that part of the process will have to go up as well. Any process that relies a lot on current teachers, which by its very nature this process does and should, will result in an ongoing cost.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Just for clarification, when you say that the employer in this case will be bearing the gap and the extra costs, is that Catholic Education, is it the individual schools or does it depend on whether or not they are part of different regions?

**Dr Perry:** They are conversations we will have to have a little bit further down the track. Our Catholic school authorities have all supported this process and are committed to the process, so there is that in-principle support. The detail of whether Brisbane Catholic Education pays the costs for the assessors for their teachers or whether we just have a global figure and they all share it, which is generally our approach—when we have a statewide approach, which we do here, generally our employers basically say, ‘We will all contribute to the cost of that. I might have a few teachers this year and none next year,’ and trade it off that way.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** It is very much loaves and fishes.

**Dr Perry:** It is. In terms of something like this, which they think is a really significant, positive initiative for teachers, they would be committed to supporting it.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Dr Perry, this process will put a bit of impost on to the Catholic education system, but in the long run this will benefit the education standards throughout the Catholic education system in Queensland?

**Dr Perry:** Absolutely. I am not raising the cost in terms of saying that the employers do not want to meet that cost but just to note it and particularly to note the cost to teachers. It is a costly process. It is different from most of the processes that happen in schools when teachers go for promotional positions and so on. We just want to note it. Employers are not resiling in any way from bearing the proportion of the costs that they need to cover this.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** This cost will not hinder some smaller schools trying to promote themselves to get the teachers there? It will not have a detrimental effect on the smaller Catholic schools?

**Dr Perry:** That would not be our anticipation. Most of our smaller schools are in our diocese. They obviously work as systems and they support all of their schools. Catholic Education has made the decision that there will be no quota supplied. If you are a teacher in a remote school, an urban school or a regional school, you are equally able to apply and, if certified, to receive the payment for that. In terms of negotiating the industrial conditions, our employers have wanted to make it open and accessible to every teacher in a Catholic school.

**Mrs WILSON:** Are you aware of how many teachers so far in the Catholic education system have applied to go through the process?

**Ms MacKenzie:** Currently, for our 2019 certification round we are in a stage that we are calling ‘notification of intention to apply’. The purpose of that is to encourage teachers to work through the process to identify that they meet the eligibility criteria and also to give us fair notice of the numbers that may apply formally on 28 June this year. To date, we have received 21 notifications of intention to apply. Whether or not they all go forward and do formally apply is yet to be seen.

**Mrs WILSON:** Is that something that you expected? Did you expect more than those 28 teachers applying?

**Ms MacKenzie:** That is around the number that we had expected. Talking to the QCT and the department and knowing their pilot and also talking to colleagues in other jurisdictions that have had the certification available for several years, we were expecting around 20.

**Mr DAMETTO:** Firstly, any initiative that keeps good teachers in the classroom is a brilliant idea. With more teachers looking for the certification of highly accomplished teacher, what burden will this put on the cost of putting children through schooling, especially through the Catholic education system, which my son went through? Will that cost then be pushed onto the customer, the student and the parent?

**Dr Perry:** I would not anticipate that that would be the case. As has been pointed out, part of the cost is met by the teacher themselves and the remainder is met by the employing authority. Because the employing authority see this, as you pointed out, as such a worthwhile addition and an opportunity for teachers, they would not be looking to pass the cost on to parents. In terms of numbers, as Nina has pointed out, we are only looking at very small numbers—20 across the state. We would anticipate that will build up over time. We also would anticipate that, as those numbers build up, schools will make appropriate accommodations in terms of other professional activities they might do. They would see they would be investing in this particular professional activity and if need be they might have to pull back on some different ones. Schools are always very conscious of the impact on fee-paying parents and would be trying to minimise that while not compromising either this process or any other process that they run.

**Mr DAMETTO:** You do not see a situation where every teacher within that school wants to be accredited and the school then has to bear the cost of everyone wanting to step up to the next level?

**Dr Perry:** In terms of the salary impact, we are not anticipating that. In fact, the standards have been designed in such a way that not everyone should meet the standards. One of the key differences in this process is that it is for those who can meet highly accomplished and lead, and that is not every teacher. That does not mean the other teachers are not good teachers. This is, as everyone has been pointing out, very rigorous; the standards are very, very high. We would not expect—and certainly this is the experience in other jurisdictions—everyone to apply and not all of those who apply will reach the standard.

**Mr DAMETTO:** Is the certification put aside for the best of the best, as they say?

**Dr Perry:** Absolutely. That is why the process needs to be as rigorous as it is—so there is credibility, so that those who are certified can rightly and proudly say, 'I'm a highly accomplished teacher,' and be recognised across the country. We are hoping that will be one of the mechanisms to enhance the status of teachers which, as you all know, is something we are all committed to and working towards.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much. It was lovely to meet you today. Thank you both for coming and assisting us. On behalf of the committee, all the best to your schools, teachers, community and staff.

**FISHBURN, Ms Deanne, Executive Manager, Professional Standards, Queensland College of Teachers**

**NEILSON, Dr Judy, Senior Manager, Certification, Queensland College of Teachers**

**CHAIR:** Welcome. Thank you for coming along today. It is much appreciated. I think this is the first time the new education committee has had the chance to meet you, so welcome. Thank you for your written submission. Would you like to make some opening statements and then we will open for questions?

**Ms Fishburn:** Certainly. The Queensland College of Teachers would like to thank the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee for the invitation to speak to the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill. This is Dr Judy Neilson. She has been overseeing the certification process on behalf of the College of Teachers.

As outlined in our submission, the QCT is responsible for regulating the teaching profession in Queensland, with the main objectives being to uphold the standards of the teaching profession, maintain public confidence and protect students in schools. It is uniquely placed to provide an independent, rigorous and consistent assessment of highly accomplished and lead teachers in certification under the national framework.

For the oral submission I have prepared a few notes around the process that the QCT has been involved in so far, just to give you some background. Commencing with preparatory work in 2016, the HAT and lead project was established to deliver the Queensland government's Letting Teachers Teach election commitment to find an attractive career pathway for teachers in the classroom, now resulting in the two new teacher classifications to be introduced in Queensland state schools. Highly accomplished and lead teachers are the two upper thresholds of a four-stage career continuum of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Certification offers voluntary validation of these higher levels, building on the two lower stages that align with teacher registration junctures—that is, graduate for provisional and proficient for full.

Following the offering of a joint training exercise in assessment under the national framework, the department, Catholic Education and Independent Schools Queensland along with the QCT all completed that training. Then the QCT commenced working with the department in 2017 and 2018 to pilot certification in North Queensland and north coast education regions. This provided an opportunity to build capacity, trial and evaluate the professional development, and assess the training and certification process with teachers from a diverse range of schools and teaching contexts.

Considerable consultation has occurred with certifying authorities in other states that have established processes. That includes South Australia, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and the ACT's teacher regulatory authority, the Teacher Quality Institute. The QCT has particularly partnered with the ACT to train three cohorts of assessors to support the rigorous and thorough assessment of submissions.

Through the pilot the QCT has contributed to professional development for certification applicants, completed the training of more than 100 assessors, moderated and reviewed each assessment, and responded openly and transparently to requests for review. Furthermore, the QCT has contributed to the AITSL national certifying authority network, influencing national policy about certification and contributing to two national moderations in this area.

To date, 47 teachers have been certified. That is 44 at highly accomplished and three at lead teacher, including teachers from special education, early childhood, outdoor education as well as primary and secondary schools. These teachers are working in small and large schools and in rural, remote, regional and metropolitan contexts. For 2019, both the department and the Queensland Catholic Education Commission have confirmed the QCT as their certifying authority for this process, and significant work has commenced to train the QCEC assessors in preparation for the first group of applicants. Once these assessors have completed the training, we are planning to do the first Queensland based cross-sectoral moderation of certification involving Queensland assessors across all sectors including Independent Schools Queensland.

There is currently considerable interest in the status of the teaching profession, particularly with the Australian government's current inquiry. Certification provides a potential opportunity to contribute to improving the status of teachers and public confidence in the profession and not only providing that individual recognition of advancement for a teacher but for the development capacity of a school through the contribution of the highly accomplished and lead teachers within that professional community.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your opening statement and also for your submission. You are in the enviable position that everybody likes you; they all said lovely things about you and all supported you doing this role. You should enjoy that. It is always lovely on a professional level. A number of stakeholders have come and spoken to me in the last few weeks and, can I say, your reputation precedes you. They have spoken very highly of you, Dr Neilson. It is lovely to meet you from the point of view generally of the committee and both of you in your organisation. As an education committee it is lovely to meet you. We have read a lot about what you do and the important role you play in regard to the profession, so thank you for coming along today.

I am interested in a comment you made in your third paragraph. You make the point about rewarding expertise rather than experience, which I think is a very valid point. You also say that you feel this program would deliver a credible and valid judgement of teacher performance that previous schemes have been unable to provide. Could you give us the benefit of your expertise in regard to what some of those previous schemes were? What were you referring to in that regard?

**Ms Fishburn:** I probably cannot name them right here, but when we first looked at certification as a place for the QCT to become involved we conducted a literature review and a scan of previous processes that occurred—and they go back over 40 years—of attempts to introduce ways to reward good teaching. The research suggests that taking it away from employers and providing an independent source offers an opportunity for that expertise to be recognised where there is no risk of other compromises. I think that is what all parties and all stakeholders have been working towards with this as an initiative.

**CHAIR:** One of the lovely things that is certainly coming through in feedback from teachers in my area—and it is much like nurses—is that they want to stay in the classroom, or the ward. They want to progress, because they are talented professionals, but they really want to stay in that practical environment. Is that feedback that you have received—that teachers want to continue to teach and not necessarily go into administrative positions as they progress?

**Ms Fishburn:** Certainly.

**Dr Neilson:** Absolutely. I have been doing a lot of professional development around the state with both the state and the Catholic sector and with the unions. Universally, the conversation is about the fact that it will reward their professionalism and that what they are most passionate about is being in the classroom. They really do not want to be administrators, which is the only other pathway that is available to them.

**Ms Fishburn:** We have done some analysis of the articles that are most read in our regular communication with teachers, which is called *eNews*. Of the highest rated articles last year, two of the top 10 articles that were read were around certification, and certification was the No. 1 read article by teachers last year.

**CHAIR:** Would you say that that is representative of people being interested in seeking advancement? It was interesting to hear the numbers from the independent education group, who said that there were limited numbers applying. Catholic Education Queensland is proposing the same thing. Would you say that, equally, there is a good understanding among teachers that it is not something that a large cohort and the biggest percentage of teachers will be able to apply for? It is quite demanding and rigorous. Can you talk about the perception in the cohort that you are representing with your professional development activities?

**Dr Neilson:** A big part of this is the professional development, because I think that in general when you say 'lead teacher' there are many very experienced teachers in schools who say, 'Of course I'm a lead teacher.' If they have a lead initiative, which means a particular project that they are involved in that is working across the school, they say, 'Absolutely, I'm a lead teacher.' The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers at 'highly accomplished' and also at 'lead' are demanding. That is basically the criteria against which the teachers are judged. Once they have done the professional development, very often they realise that there is more work for them to do in order to apply and to be successful.

At the end of the day, it is about setting them up for success. Many of them at that stage withdraw. For the department this year there have been 800 initial applicants, but once the professional development has occurred the numbers are decreasing, because they realise the amount of work they still have to do. I say to each of the groups that I speak to, 'This is the best professional development you will ever do.' I have had discussions with successful applicants in other jurisdictions. Universally, it is the best professional development, because it is the opportunity to reflect deeply on their practice.

I also make the comment that in two or three schools where they have set up processes to support their applicants—and they have had successful teachers already—there have now been a number of other teachers successful in that school as well. It is about building capacity. We talk about building a culture of evidence gathering, because that is how to draw it all together and be successful. It is not routine, particularly for older teachers. In many of the conversations I have had with them as I have gone around the state they are making it really clear that they are really excited about being involved in the process. Really, it is more a case of me saying, 'You don't need to apply this year. It is common for it to take at least 12 months, so apply next year instead, or for "lead", even apply the year after.'

**CHAIR:** I think it is a credit to the professionalism of the PD that you are providing people that they feel so empowered by it—even if they are not ready then, to be able to have that feedback to know when they might be.

**Dr Neilson:** Especially from a rural and remote perspective, I always check in a room if there is anyone there who is the only teacher from their school and make sure they set up a little collegial network so they are not going through the process on their own. That is a really important part of it.

**CHAIR:** That is wonderful. Members of parliament do not have a lot of PD opportunities. I think it is lovely to hear this great program encouraging people to reflect on their practice and extend themselves professionally. That is wonderful. In regard to appeals to QCAT, do you feel that the appeals process is the best and the right one and that it will work well, given the nature of the subject we are looking at? Do you also have a view in regard to whether those appeals should be based on the substantive decision as well as procedure?

**Ms Fishburn:** To answer your first question about the appeals as a process, we would be very comfortable with it being aligned with the current framework around how decisions are considered within the college—it being able to go through an internal review and then be subject to an external review process. For other decisions currently, that is QCAT. In regard to the process and outcome being considered, I think it needs to be considered holistically. While there would be a focus on a correct and proper process being conducted, it may also consider the outcome that was determined.

**Dr Neilson:** In terms of general feedback to applicants if they are not successful, we do an in-depth report. This has evolved over time to provide more detail on each of the 37 descriptors within their stage 1 report. They are also offered the opportunity to have a conversation with one of their assessors and me—half an hour to an hour of explicit feedback on how to support them to be more successful moving forward. The process is the appointment of a third assessor to do an independent assessment in that case, then the internal review committee and then QCAT. It is not going to work unless it is a supportive process. That is why it is so important that we go through this series of steps.

**CHAIR:** Obviously, they get an increase in pay if they are successful in the certification process through the current state system. I would imagine that that also comes with a commensurate increase in work and responsibility and workload in the school. Do you have any feedback in that regard? I would imagine that, if you have a teacher with those sorts of exemplary skills that are recognised, they would take a greater leadership role in the school, or are you envisaging that it is just a recognition of what they are doing now and at the level they are currently delivering their teaching?

**Ms Fishburn:** My understanding is that it would be a recognition of what they are doing now.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Does the college share the concerns of several media reports about a looming teacher shortage? Do you think these new accreditation levels will help address that?

**Ms Fishburn:** I think there is a definite link between providing an opportunity to give further career advancement for high-performing teachers and a raising of the status. While it is untested currently, and it is certainly research that we will be able to look to conducting in the future, I think there is a great opportunity with certification—that raised awareness of the expertise and the professional knowledge and professional practice required to be an exemplary teacher. I think that will promote public confidence and certainly raise the status. Does that answer your question?

**Mrs STUCKEY:** It is to be hoped. I was interested to see that, because the timing is pretty good, I think. I am also interested to know how many teachers from independent public schools were involved in the recent pilot that was done. I see that several hundred teachers participated in it. How many were successful in each of those levels for lead teacher?

**Ms Fishburn:** The pilot conducted was with the department and state schools only in two defined regions.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** But independent state schools.



**Ms Fishburn:** Independent state schools?

**Dr Neilson:** We do not know.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** You would not be able to find out?

**Dr Neilson:** That information was not provided—just the names of the individual teachers.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Not the schools they were from?

**Dr Neilson:** No, just the general information to submit their portfolio. Those all came through the department and were provided to us.

**Ms Fishburn:** We would know the school that they work at, but we do not investigate whether it is an independent public school. We cannot provide information about that.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** If they are successful, doesn't the employer pay the difference, because there is a gap? Is there any way we could get a list of the schools where the teachers have been successful?

**Ms Fishburn:** I think we would have to defer to the department for that as to whether we are able to provide that.

**CHAIR:** That is okay. It is a question for the department.

**Ms Fishburn:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Has any more staff been put on for the Queensland College of Teachers? Do you have to employ any more people to go through this process?

**Dr Neilson:** In the past, during the assessment season, if you like, we have had additional staff who have been state school teachers, because these are the best people to participate in the assessment. Within the QCT itself, in addition to me there are in fact six of our professional standards team who have been trained as assessors as well. The intention is to employ administrative staff to support the process moving forward.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Will there will be any guidelines set out that stop teachers from applying to enhance their positions? They might have had a little bit of a blemish earlier in their career or there have been perceived problems. Will there be any regulations to stop those teachers applying?

**Dr Neilson:** The only eligibility criteria that might be a problem is that they are required to be a fully registered teacher. If they are a fully registered teacher, previous concerns with their employment would not be raised and we do not go looking for it. They also have to have five years of teaching experience. If teachers have come from England, for instance, if they are recognised for their previous service by the department in terms of the pay scales they are on—all of that—we have oversight of that process. Our biggest concern is really authentic teaching load—those who do not have a classroom load. Then conversations happen. Usually, the recommendation is that they go to their principal and ask for a class so that they can demonstrate. The requirement for the department is a 0.2 teaching load, which is a day a week.

**Mr DAMETTO:** The Queensland Catholic Education Commission in its submission raised the point that it was a little concerned about not being able to revoke the classification. It was not a sticking point for them. Could you speak to why that was not considered when putting this together?

**Ms Fishburn:** In terms of the work to date, the college has that capacity to revoke registration.

**Mr DAMETTO:** For a teacher.

**Ms Fishburn:** Yes, for a teacher but it is considered through quite a lengthy process and for quite substantive matters. As was discussed earlier, there is no national policy around the revocation at this point in time. We would suspect that it would only be for a very small number of people who are putting themselves forward for this type of certification process. I think the department's suggestion that we can create policy to support that might be sufficient at this time.

**Mr DAMETTO:** Just so I better understand this, once you are classified you do not have to be reclassified year on year or in five years time or in 10 years time?

**Ms Fishburn:** In terms of the certification, it is a five-year certification period and then a renewal process is considered.

**Mrs WILSON:** In regard to the setting of fees, will that be happening throughout the college or is that more a department orchestrated decision?

**Ms Fishburn:** The setting of fees has been conducted in consultation but also looking to what is charged nationally so that it is comparable. As you would be aware, as an independent statutory authority we are totally funded by teacher registration fees. The expectation of the QCT board is that certification is a cost-neutral process. The fees that will be used by the applicants will help fund the Brisbane

certification process, but also the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the department are working with us to help ensure it becomes a cost-neutral process for the QCT to enable the delivery of this in a successful way.

**Mrs WILSON:** The Queensland Catholic Education Commission spoke briefly earlier and they believe it is a cost of about \$500 a day. That means that if they have two assessors there we are looking at \$5,000 per teacher to get through. That means there is a \$3,500 gap there. Who is going to be covering that gap?

**Ms Fishburn:** At the moment it is the employers. It is interesting that this as a process has been rolled out in several jurisdictions around Australia but no-one has ever investigated the true cost. The QCT is being a leader in this area and trying to establish the work value in terms of certification, and we have involved QCEC and the department in that process. Importantly, while we can use the pilot process as some guidance, people did not have to pay to be involved in the pilot process. The numbers of submissions and success rates and those sorts of things may not be completely indicative moving forward, once the certification process becomes on a fee basis. There is a lot to learn in this process.

**Mrs WILSON:** What was the cost roughly, when we look at the pilot program? Can you draw some conclusions of what the pilot program cost?

**Ms Fishburn:** I could not, no. We would have to defer to the department.

**CHAIR:** Ms Fishburn and Dr Neilson, thank you very much for your time today and for your expertise. It has been of great assistance.

**MERTENS, Ms Leah, Research Officer—Professional Issues, Queensland Teachers' Union**

**RUTTIMAN, Ms Kate, Deputy General Secretary, Queensland Teachers' Union**

**CHAIR:** Thank you for making a submission, as you always do to our inquiries. We appreciate the expertise you bring. Would you like to make an opening statement before we open up for questions?

**Ms Ruttiman:** The QTU is an organisation that represents 46,000 teachers within Queensland state schools. That means that we represent over 90 per cent of the permanent teaching workforce employed by the Department of Education. We are proud to support the amendments to this legislation particularly because professional pay—which is what highly accomplished and lead teachers are—has been a longstanding claim of the Queensland Teachers' Union for improvement with respect to the classification structures, at least for the 20-plus years that I have been an officer of the Queensland Teachers' Union. In a number of our enterprise bargaining claims we have had the need for recognition of teachers within the classroom and the establishment of professional pay classifications. That is what these additional classifications do. They recognise teachers working within classrooms and provide an alternative pathway, other than promotion, for them to receive a remuneration for operating within the levels of professional standards they currently operate within.

In January 2015 we were happy that the Labor Party announced their Letting Teachers Teach election promise, which included the commitment to introduce highly accomplished teachers and lead teachers. Once Labor were elected, we worked closely with the Department of Education and with the government to ensure that, as we were negotiating the 2016 enterprise agreement or certified agreement, the Letting Teachers Teach policy was reflected and the establishment of highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher classifications was in place. How that was to be achieved was something that we needed to negotiate.

There was work with a standing committee or working committee of the Department of Education—of which the Queensland College of Teachers were also part, as well as some of the assessing authorities—so that we could find a pathway forward to lead to certification and the establishment of those particular positions. In doing that, we established a number of parameters that were introduced through the pilot. The pilot was conducted over what was meant to be one year but ended up being over 18 months. The review of the pilot enabled us to see what worked, what we needed to reflect on and the different things that had implication for teachers within classrooms within Queensland state schools.

We were very happy that the board of the Queensland College of Teachers agreed to be the certifying authority for the time of the pilot. We were also happy that, once the pilot was completed and the review was completed, the board supported the Queensland College of Teachers being the certifying authority for highly accomplished and lead teachers within Queensland. We also support the process that ACER is recognised as a certifying authority, because one of the key platforms of the election commitment and the negotiations was that, if you were certified as a highly accomplished teacher or a lead teacher in Queensland schools, that classification could be transferred across the country. If you were leaving Queensland for whatever reason, you could have your highly accomplished teacher classification recognised when you moved into another sector, in the same way, therefore, someone coming from another state that has the same sort of certifying process that is recognised by ACER—

**Ms Mertens:** AITSL.

**Ms Ruttiman:**—AITSL, sorry—can become a highly accomplished teacher and a lead teacher within Queensland schools. We want teachers teaching. We want teachers in the classroom and we want teachers who love teaching to stay in the classroom, because when they continue to do the things that they love to do then obviously we have children who learn to love the things that they are experiencing with respect to the subjects that teachers are teaching.

We considered a range of factors when we came up with the process for certification. We finally reached agreement around the memorandum of agreement last year that arose as a consequence of the negotiations and the pilot of the highly accomplished and lead teacher classifications in Queensland schools. In the first instance, the two regions that were chosen—Far North Queensland and the north coast—were deliberate. I know that encompasses some of the areas of the members of the committee. That was because of the density of population within those locations. We wanted to know that teachers no matter where they were in Queensland could access highly accomplished teacher or lead teacher classifications.

The amendments to the legislation reflect the process that we agreed as part of the MOA. That includes the stage 1 and stage 2 processes. I know that there has been some discussion with respect to what happens if someone moves to stage 2 and is unsuccessful in receiving the highly accomplished or lead teacher classification. I need to start with the fact that the process is so rigorous that in the first instance your eligibility is such as a classroom teacher that you have to have five years experience but you also need to have participated in your annual performance review process at least twice for highly accomplished teachers and three times for lead teachers. In those annual performance review processes, you reflect against the professional standards of teachers. In reflecting against those professional standards of teachers you can identify the areas that you need to further develop or the things that you would like to further do in order to aspire to be a highly accomplished teacher or recognised as a highly accomplished teacher or certified as a lead teacher. That one-on-one process was very, very important. Before you actually lodge your application at stage 1 for certification as a highly accomplished teacher, you will have gone through those sorts of conversations—professional and collegial conversations—with your supervisor, with your colleagues and with a range of other people, as well as undertaken professional development.

In our experience through the pilot, it is unusual following the assessment stage at stage 1 for someone not to receive highly accomplished teacher or lead teacher status. It is unusual. If that does happen, in the development of the MOA we had a discussion about which was the preferred place for external review of that particular decision at stage 2. In the first instance the QTCU had the view that it should have been the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, because we are talking about salaries as they align to classifications within the teaching stream, but we were also given the opportunity to think about whether this is about awarding salaries or about reviewing a particular process. In reality, it is more about reviewing an internal review process that the Queensland College of Teachers undertook. We know that appeals around registration and appeals around internal processes aligning to registration with the Queensland College of Teachers sit with QCAT. Consequently, we were also advised that QCAT was the preferred place for those reviews, so we support that.

Ultimately, it is your decision but, if you look at the QIRC as the external body for review, there are a couple of factors that we would ask you to consider. One of them is that it is the QIRC sitting as the Industrial Relations Commission, not the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission sitting as the Public Service Commission. It is very important to make the distinction that this is not a promotional position; this is a classroom teacher position. It is an additional classification within that classroom teaching stream; it is not a promotion. Promotion appeals are heard by the Public Service Commission of QIRC sitting as the Public Service Commission. One of the things that we know from the Public Service Commission is that there can be an inconsistency in the reasons for decisions that are made by the PSC because there is not an establishment of precedent or there is not the ability for commissioners to discuss matters that have previously been before them aligned to the Public Service Commission. It is a quirkiness of the legislation, whereas if you sit as the QIRC then precedent is set. There is consistency. There is the ability for people to review those decisions.

That being said, we understand that QCAT is the tribunal that reviews, as I said, internal processes of government related bodies. We understand and are supportive of QCAT being able to undertake those particular roles. They too have some issues with respect to consistency in decisions depending on the precedents they are able to review or otherwise, and there are time delays in the release of those particular decisions. While our initial position was the QIRC, we agreed in the MOA that it should be the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal, QCAT. We know that there are questions that you have raised around that, so we wanted to address the reason we have ended where we have.

Ultimately, we do accept that it is the committee's decision or recommendation with respect to where they believe that should appropriately sit. However, in saying that, we do have the statewide rollout, which is part of the commitment under the certified agreement and part of the commitment under Letting Teachers Teach, of the highly accomplished and lead teacher classifications happening right now. We would hate to see that any amendment to the processes that have been agreed would either impact on the cost of that or impact in effecting a delay in that particular process. All of those factors are factors that we would ask you to consider when you are making those decisions.

One of the things that we strongly support in this particular model of certification and therefore the amendments to the legislation is that this is the profession making decisions for the profession. The assessors are classroom teachers and teachers in promotional positions who have teaching experience. The Queensland College of Teachers is our professional registration body, so they are the profession making decisions on behalf of the profession. That is what AITSL really should be

about. It is the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. What better way for us to grow and develop and be proud of and respect our profession than by having us make decisions for each other about where we are all operating within our professional standards?

**CHAIR:** Ms Ruttiman, I might stop you there. You have given a very fulsome introductory statement to the point where you have actually answered pretty much every one of my questions. That is a good thing; that is why we have stakeholder groups come. It is very clear that you are very passionate about this, and I think you said you have been working on it for 20 years. I appreciate where that passion comes from. I am sure there are other points you would like to make and they may come out with the questioning. You said you represent quite a few teachers.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Yes, 46,000.

**CHAIR:** What has been their response in regard to the pilot?

**Ms Ruttiman:** Some people were a little bit shocked at how rigorous the pilot actually was and the processes that applied. We were always very clear that this was a process that needed to be rigorous and it was a process that was agreed to be rigorous. It is about valuing our profession. When the value of the role was distributed through the salaries for highly accomplished and lead teachers, people had no question then that it certainly was reflective of the value of the work that a highly accomplished teacher or lead teacher does.

However, we have had significant interest in the pilot and we have had significant interest in the statewide rollout in 2019. We did have people asking why they could not be part of the pilot, why we had chosen those two particular regions and whether they would be disadvantaged because they did not have the capacity to put their hands up, go through the initial process and maybe go through the process in 2019 again if they were unsuccessful. In the majority, it has been positive because they do see that this provides a salary horizon, a remuneration level that recognises the passion that teachers bring to the classroom who want to stay in the classroom.

**CHAIR:** And of course we want them to stay in the classroom. I am a mum too. We love to have brilliant teachers in the classroom. I believe you were here when Independent Schools Queensland were here.

**Ms Ruttiman:** I think Ms Mertens was.

**CHAIR:** They made the point about the importance of allowing an option for teachers to stay in the classroom. I just lost my point when we were talking then. I had a question arising from something you said. I will come back to it.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I note that the reforms were promised back in 2015.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Yes.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Have there been any concerns about the delay in implementing them, especially just playing out against that backdrop in the media about teacher shortages?

**Ms Ruttiman:** There has not been a concern about the delay in implementing them because we wanted to get it right. The fact that you can apply for certification after your fifth year of teaching can be an attraction for those teachers who, as we know through all of the reports in the media, may choose to leave teaching in their first five years. If they see that they are going to be recognised for the amount of work they are doing, the different skills they bring and the level they are operating at within the professional standards post their fifth year of teaching, it provides an incentive for them to continue to develop and grow and invest in themselves as teachers.

Whether this will stem the tide or whether this will provide a motivation for people to become teachers is yet to be determined, because obviously the value of the role was only determined last year and the statewide rollout of these classifications is only happening this year. I do know, though, that a lot more investment is happening in annual performance review processes and in teachers being able to reflect against their own professional development and their own personal development as they aspire to become highly accomplished and lead teachers.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** I found your preamble very interesting and I was interested in your comment that lead teachers and HATs is not a promotion; it is an earned accreditation. I understand that it is very new, but do you see this group as being more likely to seek promotion? Do you think that will give them confidence, or is the whole promotion process out of their hands?

**Ms Ruttiman:** They can apply for promotion if that is what they wish to do. We have had a number of different conversations about why people might choose to stay in the classroom versus why people might choose to enter a promotional position. One of the things we speak about is that highly accomplished and lead teacher is about investing back within the classroom and the students that they have, as well as mentoring and developing other teachers in classrooms, whereas your

promotional positions—such as your head of department, your head of curriculum, your deputy principal, your school leaders—are wanting to provide instructional leadership as well as other forms of leadership and management within the schools.

People choose a pathway. If people are choosing to stay in the classroom, it is unlikely that they then choose to become a promotional officer, or a classified officer as we call them in Queensland, but it does not prevent them from doing so. We have actually had some heads of curriculum and some former master teachers express interest for certification or apply for certification in this round. You will see in the MOA that you will have access to that. If you are a classified officer or in a promotional position and you achieve highly accomplished or lead teacher, you firstly have to have an authentic teaching load and you secondly then make a decision as to whether you want to return to the classroom in your full-time capacity or you want to continue on your school leadership or promotional position journey. You cannot hold both; it is one or the other. That is part of the impetus behind this, about keeping great classroom teachers who do not aspire to promotional positions in the classroom.

**Mrs STUCKEY:** Thank you for that. I was thinking that, because you can apply for this new accreditation after five years, there would be a degree of confidence building. Not everybody is going to put themselves forward. I imagine there will be some colleagues who will go, 'Hey, you really should have a try at this,' and perhaps after several years they will decide that they are more keen for promotion. I see this as an incredible door opener. We would love to have more great teachers in the classroom and attract more. That is why I asked that, because I feel very much that those teachers, especially in those early years, probably do not know if they do want to stay in the classroom all the time or if they might feel effective if they were promoted.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Absolutely, but it does provide that attraction for those people who are in their fifth, sixth or seventh year of teaching who might not be thinking that they want to become promotional officers to remain in the profession. That is one of those things that we want to do. We want to retain; we do not want to lose.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I think this is a great move forward to retain good quality teachers in the system who go off to other careers, as you have seen. I have a lot of respect for teachers. I know the heavy workload they have and their great work. I am concerned about whether we will see teachers step forward. Already, there are not enough hours in the day for a lot of teachers. With their KPIs and this and that, do you think a lot of teachers might balk at moving forward because of the extra workload and the strain on them?

**Ms Ruttiman:** The idea is not that this creates an extra workload. This is why it is so important that it is embedded as part of the annual performance review process and that you need to go through at least two annual performance review processes before you are eligible to apply for certification as a highly accomplished teacher. In going through that process, it is about building your portfolio, building your skills, being able to reflect against those standards that you are aspiring to work within. Does that mean people might take on additional responsibilities, or does that mean people might take on mentoring roles or lead particular programs? Absolutely, but we want people who love particular subjects to lead particular programs and things like that as well.

I think what makes people balk—and we saw this in a more simple process, which was experienced senior teacher—is the lack of confidence people have in their own ability and the lack of willingness for teachers to put their head up say, 'You know what? I'm really good and I should be recognised for being really good.' I do know that people say, 'I don't have the time,' or some are saying, 'I'll wait and see what happens in this process. I want to see what it's like in 2019.' It just depends, but the first thing we have to do is build the profession and the confidence in the profession to be proud of what it is that they do. They are highly respected and should be respected for all of the work they do, and this recognises the professionalism they bring to their classrooms. Once we build that confidence and once we build that pride—which, unfortunately, gets pulled down a fair bit by media reports, public commentary and a range of different things—we hope to see the numbers who are expressing a view that they are going to apply for certification increase.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I totally agree with you. The teaching profession has been dragged down over many years. They are a great asset to our community because in a community like mine the only way we are going to lift our standard of living is through education. That is why we need great teachers. This will benefit the whole of the state. In regional Queensland and rural Queensland, this will lift the standard of education. That is my understanding of it.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Absolutely. In fact, there were three lead teachers who came from the pilot and one of them is in Far North Queensland. The highly accomplished teachers are spread across those two particular regions. It does mean that we will have teachers working in rural and remote

communities who are highly accomplished and lead teachers who can work in partnership with beginning teachers as well as less experienced teachers and continue to build their capacity, which can only reflect on improving learning experiences for students.

**Mrs WILSON:** How does this place teachers' salaries when we are looking at this with other states and territories? Have you had an opportunity to look at their salaries?

**Ms Ruttiman:** Yes, I have had a look.

**Mrs WILSON:** How does that put us now in line with other states and territories?

**Ms Ruttiman:** Ironically, I have just come from informal negotiations for our EB so, yes, I have looked at our salaries. The highly accomplished and lead teacher remuneration in Queensland is amongst some of the highest across the country. When we look at like classifications, not all of the classifications that are remunerated at this level are nationally certified highly accomplished teacher or lead teacher classifications. It is amongst some of the highest. To be very clear, though, this is not a step in the teacher classification scale. The top of the scale, from the point of view of the annual progression or biennial progression, is experienced senior teacher, whereas these are certification processes which for some will result in accelerated progression to a higher salary.

**Mrs WILSON:** That is fantastic. My parents were both teachers so I know how hard the profession works. In your view, how will this improve educational outcomes for our students? That is very important also when looking at these certifications.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Anything that helps teachers familiarise themselves with the Professional Standards for Teachers will assist in improving learning experiences for students. For example, one of the professional standards is knowing students and how they learn. Obviously that encompasses a range of different factors. Each level of highly accomplished and lead teacher also extends on that particular professional standard.

We talk about teaching conditions being learning conditions. As we invest in our professional skills and we create differentiated learning experience for students in our classrooms, we are operating at a level where we can mentor people to grow and develop. We are only going to extend those experiences and skills to the students that we teach. It will improve learning experiences for students, and you would hope that improving learning experiences would lead to improved learning outcomes, but obviously a child does not neatly fit into a professional standard. It is about being able to work with children to provide them with the best opportunities that will allow them to aspire to reach the best outcomes they can reach.

**Mrs WILSON:** Do you know how many of your members took part in the pilot program?

**Ms Mertens:** Five hundred.

**Mrs WILSON:** I was wondering whether they were all union members.

**Ms Mertens:** The majority.

**Ms Ruttiman:** The vast majority. We did not go through the applicants and see who were our members and who were not. We did not have the opportunity to do that.

**Mrs WILSON:** No, it is just interesting to make sure that all teachers have that opportunity.

**Ms Ruttiman:** Yes, they do. All teachers have the opportunity because it is under the industrial instrument. If you are not a member of the Queensland Teachers' Union you still have the opportunity to go through—

**Mrs WILSON:** I understand that. I was just wanting to make sure that all teachers are hearing about it because in other sectors sometimes they may miss out. Teaching is probably different, but I want to make sure that all teachers have that opportunity.

**Ms Mertens:** We had the opportunity to present joint presentations with the Department of Education, the unions and the QCT around the state about the pilot during 2017. We agreed to the wording of the pilot. Kate, Sam Pigeon, the former vice-president, and I travelled to all of the regional centres—Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Toowoomba—presenting an overview of the process in the pilot and the agreed expectations around who could apply, the process at the time, developing the portfolio, what it was based on and the outcome. That was at a time when we had not yet negotiated the salary for highly accomplished and lead teachers. It was an interim introductory presentation that we did jointly and that was very well received by everyone. Those presentations were open to everyone, not just union members, and we were overwhelmed with people coming along to those.

Since then the union took it upon itself to provide more in-depth professional development and presentations for members, and non-members who were invited to come along often took the opportunity to join the union after they saw the passion that we have put into creating an additional pathway for classroom teachers who want to stay and do what they do best, which is to teach in the classroom. We have continued those professional development opportunities by setting up our own professional development, and the Department of Education is joining in with those in partnership. They have developed webinars as well, and you heard earlier from the QCT about its in-depth PD. Together the three of us are working as a very tight-knit team to ensure this initiative is a success.

**Mrs WILSON:** Sounds fantastic.

**CHAIR:** Thank you very much for your time today. The question that I had has come back to mind but I am happy to take that offline because our time has expired. That concludes the hearing. Thank you to all stakeholders who have taken the time to appear before the committee today. Thank you to our Hansard reporters. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's web page in due course. I declare this public hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 12.49 pm.**