

Submission to the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019



March 2019

About Queensland Independent Schools

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) is the peak representative body for Queensland's independent schools.

Community confidence in the independent schooling sector remains strong with about 123,000 students enrolled in 209 independent schools across Queensland in 2018. These schools educate approximately 15 percent of the state's total school-age population and about 20 percent of all secondary students.

The strength of Queensland's independent schooling sector lies in the rich mix of education choices and opportunities local schools provide families. Independent schools are as diverse as the students and parents who make up their close-knit communities. Of Queensland's 209 independent schools: 183 educate children with disability; 109 cater for students for whom English is a second language or dialect; 184 enrol Indigenous students; 72 offer international education programs; 33 provide boarding services; and 17 cater specifically for students who have disengaged from mainstream education.

Common to all independent schools is their commitment to strong student outcomes, high standards of behaviour, and the welfare and well-being of students.

Over the past 10 years, enrolments at Queensland independent schools have increased by 21 percent. This growth is a clear indication that parents value an independent education and are prepared to invest their after-tax incomes in their child's schooling.

Summary

Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) notes the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019*.

ISQ does not have any issues to raise in relation to the Bill.

ISQ believes the provision for the Queensland College of Teachers (QCT) to be a nationally recognised certifier of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Queensland is a positive initiative with significant benefits for the teaching profession and schools.

ISQ is the first formally recognised certifying authority in Queensland commencing in 2017.

Should QCT become another certifying authority in Queensland, ISQ will work together with the QCT to recognise and support high performing teachers in schools in Queensland. As an established and experienced certifying authority, ISQ welcomes any opportunity to work together to moderate, share expertise and help the QCT in their activities as a newly recognised certifying body in Queensland.

Background

ISQ is an established certifying authority in Queensland that provides a high quality, nationally consistent approach to identifying and certifying teachers according to the advanced career stages of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

The ISQ approach enables teachers in independent schools to:

- participate in professional learning and development through reflection that includes self and peer review
- work with a school-based mentor to deeply reflect on their practice as it aligns to the Highly Accomplished and Lead Career Stages
- demonstrate an understanding of what quality teaching is, based on the advanced career stages of the APST
- gather evidence of career progression through career stages – Highly Accomplished to Lead.

This approach is an established, reflective, rigorous and evidence-based process for teachers who are interested in receiving support and acknowledgment for their knowledge, practice, and engagement at the Highly Accomplished or Lead Career Stages. In close collaboration with the schools involved, ISQ offers support and acknowledgment for their teachers and establishes practices that evidence the impact of quality teachers on the outcomes of students.

Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019

The Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Amendment Bill 2019 will enable the QCT to perform the role of certifying authority for the certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers.

ISQ does not have any issues to raise in relation to the Bill.

It is noted that Clause 13 of the Bill inserts a new Regulation into the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Regulation 2016* to prescribe employing authorities under Section 67A of the Act, being an employing authority for State schools and an employing authority for a non-State school represented by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

It is understood that the Bill and Regulation prescribe this to account for the fact that ISQ is currently a certifying authority. This provides the opportunity for teachers employed at independent schools to make application through ISQ to be certified as Highly Accomplished or Lead.

It is further understood that should the independent sector at some future point determine that it is appropriate for the QCT to undertake the certification process in respect of teachers employed in independent schools, the Regulation would be amended to include employing authorities for non-State schools represented by ISQ.

As an established certifying authority in Queensland, ISQ will collaborate with the QCT if they become another nationally recognised certifying authority.

At this time, ISQ will continue to act as the certifying authority for teachers in independent schools in Queensland and requests the QCT to position ISQ as an appropriate, viable, and equal body to act as an authority for independent schools.

ISQ notes that appropriate review processes are being developed to support QCT's proposed certification process which includes amendments to Chapter 2 of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005* to insert Chapter 2A Certification of teachers and this includes provisions that a decision is subject to internal review and potentially external review by the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), should an unsuccessful applicant choose to seek it, in accordance with Chapter 8.

ISQ notes that this proposed review process is not in accordance with the practices of some of the established certifying authorities, including ISQ, which prescribe that a review of procedure is the only available recourse for unsuccessful applicants.

ISQ acknowledges that under the AITSL Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia (2017), jurisdictional processes and legislation apply and QCT is able to allow appeals based on decision rather than process.

References

Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), 2017, Guide to the Certification of Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers in Australia, Melbourne, available from https://www.aitsl.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/guide-to-cert_online.pdf?sfvrsn=95e9ec3c_0