

**TEACHER REGISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 17 August.

**MS J.L. HANNIS (Collie–Preston)** [1.52 pm]: I thank members for the opportunity to speak to the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill 2022. I want to start by acknowledging the number of former teachers who currently sit in the Western Australian Parliament. I am one of them. I am not acknowledging myself, trust me; I am just saying that I am one of those people. I want to start my contribution by telling members my favourite way of disarming people. When people in the community met me as a teacher, they would often ask me how many children I had. I would say, “This year, 100.” They would look quite perplexed and I would tell them that my career and enterprise class has 25 students. I teach five classes a day, with approximately 25 students in each senior school class, which is 100 kids a year. Thankfully, I did not teach maths because that is not my strong point! Certainly, people were quite amused at the idea that I had 100 children.

In beginning my contribution today, from the perspective of an educator—this is shared by every teacher in every classroom, certainly in Western Australia, Australia and probably the world—I was not quite sure how someone could actually love other people’s children almost as much as they loved their own. I have two of my own kids. I speak on behalf of just about every teacher in Western Australia, and certainly on behalf of me and all members in the chamber today. The reason for that is that teaching is a calling. It is not a job. It is something teachers live and breathe. From the minute they wake up, they worry about whether the kids in their class will have the resources they need for the day. They worry about whether they have prepared their lessons in enough detail so that the student who is struggling in their classroom will understand what they are trying to teach them. I think it is something that teachers want to do. I would like to start by saying thank you to all teachers, retired teachers and those who are beginning the journey and training to be teachers. A number of teachers and students are in the public gallery today in preparation for question time. Thank you and welcome. Hopefully, there are some young teachers in their ranks.

In reflecting on this bill, I considered how the teaching profession touches all our lives in some way. At some point, we have all had a teacher who has made a difference in our education. Research shows that teachers are the single most important factor in a child’s learning and their achievements outside their own family. The teacher registration scheme has been in effect in Western Australia for around 20 years. I think the key point for all of us when we are talking about teachers, teacher registration and this bill is that the paramount consideration of the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia is the best interests of the children in our schools. As at 30 June 2022, there were 56 751 registered teachers in Western Australia. Fully registered teachers make up 78 per cent of that, with a number of provisional, non-practising and limited-registration teachers making up the difference. The Teacher Registration Amendment Bill follows the 2018 review of the Teacher Registration Act, which included consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including employers and unions. Changes to the act will strengthen the powers of the board to respond to very serious matters of child safety involving teachers, consistent with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

We need to make sure that we have an effective registration system that allows teachers to move between registration categories and improves fairness for teachers returning after an absence. The changes to the act will also allow Western Australia to fully participate in the Australian Teacher Workforce Data strategy, which is a COAG initiative to identify gaps in the availability of teachers across Australia. Importantly, it will provide for and promote a skilled teaching workforce within Western Australia.

Other aspects of the bill that I would like to highlight make changes to the scheme of teacher registration fairer. A key change is how the category of non-practising teacher registration will work. Further, two subcategories of registration have been included in the provisional registration. There is recognition of returning teachers to teaching practice as distinguished from graduate teachers. This will allow employers to distinguish between new teachers and more experienced teachers returning to the profession.

Making note of all those very important aspects within the Teacher Registration Amendment Bill, I would like to again talk about the importance of teachers and how critical they are in the educational success of young people right across Western Australia. In the high school sector, the area in which I have most experience, it is critically important in achieving outcomes for students for post-school success. On average, approximately 30 per cent of high school students study ATAR courses, leading to university qualifications, and around 70 per cent of students study vocational education. It is important to understand that there are some barriers for education for regional students. In my case, a lot of students in Collie do a gap year. I am sure that is the case in a lot of other regional communities. I am looking round the room at the people from the regions. There is certainly the opportunity for young people in our communities to take that gap year, earn some money and set themselves up ready to come to the city for education and further training.

The really important thing about teaching is that it is about creating a safe space for all young people within Western Australia. Often, we are the first point for young people to understand respectful relationships. Certainly, early education is about promoting those values of sharing and making sure that we know how to speak nicely to other people—all very important lessons that people need to learn.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 4969.]