

## Proposed Education Bill has wide reaching ramifications



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Legislation was recently introduced in the NSW Parliament that seeks to change the way teachers support the wellbeing of students and the subject material that can be covered in classes.

Under the guise of changing education laws to ensure “schools must recognise that parents are primarily responsible for the development and formation of moral and ethical standards and social and political values in their children”, One Nation’s Mark Latham proposes that schools enter into consultation with parents about the content of subjects, including publishing content on all courses at the beginning of every year. This is despite syllabus requirements prescribing courses of study that are publically available.

He seeks to eradicate “ideological instruction” on matters including, “refugees, climate change, racial and Indigenous issues” as well as those related to sexuality and gender. The bill goes further in its opposition to diverse sexuality and gender, with teachers, principals and school counsellors put at risk of deregistration should they support the wellbeing of trans and gender diverse students.



A member of the teaching service who affirms a trans or gender-diverse student’s gender, teaches diversity and promotes tolerance of this difference (ultimately to address bullying and harassment), or addresses bullying by explaining that there are a variety of genders, would effectively lose their job.

In his speech to Parliament Latham acknowledged that parents already have the right to remove students from classes where they objected to the content, however, he believes current laws and policy don’t go far enough. He seeks to force his own world view on parents and students in public education and force teachers to do this on his behalf.

The last year has been very challenging for students, parents and teachers with the impact of drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic taking its toll. Through the care and dedication of teachers, schools have provided a stable and safe environment for students and their parents in these uncertain times. Teachers continue to create environments where young people develop and test their knowledge, skills and values, and show care and respect for each other. This bill explicitly threatens to eradicate the cohesive school communities we have worked hard to create, and to pit parents against the school system and teachers. This bill affects the wellbeing of all students.

Federation opposes this bill and supports the [joint statement](#) released by the Gay & Lesbian Rights Lobby. All students and their families across NSW must feel safe and supported at school, and teachers must feel safe and supported both in their professional practice and on a personal level.

Federation also supports the Equality Australia campaign against this Bill and encourages teachers to make contact with politicians to express their concern for this damaging Bill. Online messages can be sent via [Equality Australia website](#), or you can find the contact details of members of Parliament [here](#).