

## Role of Committee / Group

In 2018, the Honourable Grace Grace MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations, established the Ministerial Student Advisory Council to give Queensland students an opportunity to provide advice and feedback about a range of education matters. Students have advised the Minister on bullying and mental health, inclusive education, the NAPLAN Review and the National Declaration of Educational Goals for Young Australians.

## Issues

- COVID-19 impacts on student learning and wellbeing
  - In 2020, COVID-19 has significantly disrupted traditional schooling methods. Students and teachers were forced to adapt to a 'learning from home' approach, effecting student's learning and wellbeing to different extents across Queensland. Members of the council were asked to share their 'learning from home' experiences. A summary of this discussion is below:
    - Positive impacts of COVID-19 on student learning and wellbeing
      - Students were able to enhance their technology skills and gain insight into some of the online communication platforms used throughout the workforce and tertiary education (online meetings, independent and self-guided learning etc.), helping students prepare for life after school.
      - Students also gained an appreciation for their teachers during COVID-19. Being forced to learn from home without easily accessible help from teachers made students recognise all the individualised assistance teachers willingly provide, allowing students to gain additional respect and appreciation for their teachers.
    - Negative impacts of COVID-19 on student learning and wellbeing
      - COVID-19 proved to be a very anxious and stressful time for students, particularly year 11s and 12s. Teachers were constantly reshuffling the QCAA syllabus to better suit learning from home, breaking routine, and evoking anxiety about whether content will be missed. Year 11 assessment was also made easier, so students are worried that they aren't fully prepared with the necessary skillsets needed for ATAR in grade 12.
      - Students found it very hard to self-motivate themselves during COVID-19. A predominant point raised in the meeting was that schoolwork felt like homework, so students struggled to find the necessary drive to complete assigned homework outside of the normal six-hour schooling day. Students often felt themselves struggling to understand content without face-to-face student/teacher interaction, further contributing to the decline in student well-being during COVID-19.
- Recognising students who are completing school in 2020
  - Due to social distancing measures and other government restrictions, many end-of-school celebrations have had to be changed or scaled-down. The Honourable Grace Grace asked members of the Ministerial Student Advisory Council to propose COVID-safe ways in which students in year 12 could be recognised for their achievements. A summary of this discussion is below:
    - Students could be recognised through an online video featuring the Minister herself, and perhaps some well-known celebrities.
    - Restrictions could be eased to allow students to dance during their final end-of-year celebrations.

## Recommendation (s) / Next Steps

- Changes to 'learning from home' if a second wave did occur.
  - During the meeting, members were asked to recommend ways in which learning from home could be improved in the event of a second wave. Below is an outline of these recommendations:
    - More resources could be provided to students, particularly in rural areas. During learning from home, families were subject to constant financial pressure to provide internet for students whilst continuing to pay school fees. In rural areas, this financial strain was prominent, as connections to Wi-Fi were not easily accessible. In the event of a second wave, it is recommended that schools and the Government work in partnership to lower school fees and help provide extra resources to students and families, such as reduced internet costs, to help maintain learning whilst reducing monetary stress. Teachers should also share their learning resources with other schools, enhancing student's understanding of concepts and reducing stress.
    - To further prepare students for learning from home, it is recommended that schools integrate more online learning into everyday schooling life. Through this integration, students are able to better adapt to learning from home as individuals discover what best motivates them in the absence of teachers, enhancing work productivity and alleviating stress associated with 'falling behind on learning'.

## Next Meeting

To be confirmed