



Media Release
Hon Sarah Game MLC
2nd March 2023

New One Nation bill tackles unfair educational inequity for children in state care.

Alarmed by the absence of reporting on the educational outcomes of children and young people in state care, Sarah Game MLC is calling for an immediate change to the current system. The *Statutes Amendment (Children in Care) Bill 2023* will:

- Cause the collection, reporting and tabling of statistical data pertaining to educational outcomes of children in state care, encompassing:
 - **All levels of completed educational attainment** from kindergarten through to SACE
 - **All participation and attendance** in any recognised educational programs
 - **Acknowledgement of any failure** to attend or complete approved learning programs
- Cause the Minister for Child Protection and the Minister for Education to meet at least every 12 months **to discuss, in exclusivity, the educational outcomes of children in state care**

*“My understanding is that all this information can easily be sourced, de-identified and tabled. In fact, **we know this can be recorded** as we have NAPLAN results as a minimum.”*

Those NAPLAN results show that **only 27.4% of children attending year 9 studies while in state care met the Standard of Educational Achievement for Numeracy in 2021.**

The Education Department notes in its NAPLAN reporting:

“Performance of children and young people in care is consistently well below the performance... against all three measures [literacy, numeracy and writing] and across all year levels.”

Ms Game believes the educational achievements and aspirations of children and young people in care should be the responsibility of both departments. The One Nation member has already called for a Select Committee to investigate causes and solutions to chronic student absenteeism and school refusal.

The education system is failing children from families already at a socio-economic disadvantage.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds make up over 50% of students temporarily suspended from school, and 60% of students excluded from school, despite being less than 30% of the general school population.

Category 1 disadvantaged schools have an absenteeism rate of almost 25%, compared to the Category 7 school average of only 6.4% absenteeism.

The *Statutes Amendment (Children in Care) Bill 2023* is about mandating better communication and mandating clear reporting and outcomes.

Ms Game will introduce her Bill to the Upper House on Wednesday 8th March.

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Quotes attributable to Ms Game:

*“**One Nation believes in tangible outcomes**; we believe in transparency. This is targeted. It will reveal eye-opening data that will drive real change.”*

*“At present, no one is tackling this issue. Child Protection says it is not their responsibility. Education says it is not their responsibility either. The academic outcomes of students who are living under state care should be **the responsibility of both Ministers.**”*

*“I do not understand why recording this information and talking about it is not a part of the basic remit of the two Ministers [Hildyard and Boyer]. Surely, **looking after our most vulnerable, our children and young people in care, should be one of their highest priorities.**”*

*“We do not know what percentage of students suspended or excluded from school are in the state care system, because **that information is simply not being recorded.** We do not even know how many of them complete SACE each year.”*

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