

## **Queensland Minister for Education Grace Grace supportive of guidance role in response to correspondence from QGCA**

QGCA President Brian Day recently wrote a [letter to Minister of Education Grace Grace](#) outlining concerns about the recommendations of the Productivity Commission review of mental health services in Australia. In particular, QGCA had concerns about the [draft recommendation for Early Childhood, Children and Young People](#) that a Senior Teacher be responsible for the mental health and well-being of school students, despite the two submissions by the Australian Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools (APACS) advocating for an increased number of Psychologists, Guidance Officers or Guidance Counsellors in schools to address the problem of increasing mental health concerns of students ([first APACS submission](#); [second APACS submission](#)).

QGCA were delighted to receive a [letter in response from Minister Grace](#) in which she gave her support of the guidance role in schools. *“Please be assured the Department of Education does not currently have plans to employ senior teachers in schools to be responsible for student mental health and wellbeing. In Queensland state schools, guidance officers are the key point of contact for supporting students’ mental health and wellbeing, and would be the most appropriate person to facilitate referrals to local mental health support services and/or private providers.*

*Guidance officers are highly respected and valued members of their school communities and the department will continue to highlight the importance of their work. This includes promoting the role and services offered by guidance officers through events such as Guidance Week.*

*The department is committed to ensuring students are able to access the services provided by guidance officers.”*

Over many years, QGCA has worked to develop a relationship with Ministers of Education and senior personnel in the education department, to raise awareness of the critical work of guidance officers in schools and to better advocate for the guidance role. Minister Grace acknowledged this relationship, *“The department values the ongoing relationship it has with the Queensland Guidance and Counselling Association and looks forward to continuing to work closely with you and your association in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all students.”*