

**SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR HSC STUDENTS**

On 16 September 2009, Dr John Kaye MLC asked the following question in the Budget Estimates Committee:

**Question 5: SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR HSC STUDENTS**

Dr Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training

- (a) When are students permitted to have access to special provisions?
- (b) How are parents informed of the availability of HSC special provisions?
- (c) Is information in relation to HSC special provisions sent out to schools?
- (d) Is it mandatory for all schools (government and non-government) to inform parents of HSC special provisions availability?
- (e) What is the timeline involved in accessing HSC special provisions for a student and how long must need be demonstrated before a student can access special provisions?

**ANSWER:**

- (a) Special provisions are available to all students with condition(s) that affect their ability to read the questions and/or communicate their responses, in order to allow them a fair attempt at their exams.

Regardless of the nature of a special need, provisions are granted solely on the basis of the implications of that need on examination performance. Cases are reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure that adjustments and access arrangements do not confer an advantage on the candidate.

Applications for submissions open at Term 4 of the year before the tests are held - that is, Term 4 of Year 9 for a School Certificate student and Term 4 of Year 11 for an HSC student.

The closing date for applications is the end of Term 1 of the year the exams are held, though exemptions are available for students suffering certain conditions. Emergency applications for students suffering an acute illness or injury (for example, a fracture to their writing arm) may be submitted at any time before the exams.

Schools may also make arrangements similar to the Board's special examination provisions for their internal assessments, such as Trial HSC exams. These arrangements are subject to local school rules and are not administered by the Board.

- (b) At the commencement of Year 12, every HSC student is given a booklet called *Rules and Procedures for Higher School Certificate Candidates*. Section 16 of this booklet specifically deals with special provisions. Students must confirm that they have read this booklet and discussed it with their parents or caregivers as a condition of their enrolment in the HSC.

The Board also provides a substantial amount of information on its Schools Online website about special examination provisions in particular, including a description of the application process, the application form, information on how to apply online, details about the implementation of certain provisions and a guide for students and parents.

Board of Studies Liaison Officers frequently speak at school-based evening meetings attended by parents and if the group represents upcoming School Certificate and HSC students, commonly discuss special exam provisions with the parents.

In Term 2, 2009 both the Parents and Citizens' Federation Journal and the Parents Council newsletter published articles sourced from the Board of Studies to further explain special examination provisions to parents.

- (c) As indicated above, every HSC student is informed of the opportunity to apply for special provisions in the *Rules and Procedures* booklet provided to them.

Information is also provided to schools through the Schools Online website, as discussed above.

- (d) As indicated above, every HSC student is informed of the opportunity to apply for special provisions in the *Rules and Procedures* booklet provided to them, and is obliged to discuss this information with their parents or caregivers.

Although it is common practice for schools to further discuss the special provisions program with parents, the Board of Studies does not mandate this. All schools should, however, be aware of their responsibilities to students under the Commonwealth's Disabilities Discrimination Act.

The Schools Online website includes advice to parents to discuss applications with their child's Year Adviser or school counsellor, and encourages parents to be involved in the process of applying.

- (e) Where a student has provided details of a diagnosed condition and functional evidence that this condition affects their classroom or examination performance, special provisions are granted as soon as possible after application.

Emergency provisions may be approved up to the day of an examination where, for example, a student breaks their hand and is unable to write for themselves and so may be granted the use of a writer.

**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

# MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

### CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM

Question 1 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM - The Hon. Christine Robertson to the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

Can the Minister update the Committee on the status of the Department's capital works program?

#### ANSWER:

The Rees Government has a proud record of investing in our educational facilities. This year, we are continuing our commitment to improve school and TAFE facilities.

In 2009/10 funding has been provided for \$2.567 billion in capital works on school infrastructure, to construct new and redevelop existing school facilities and to carry out major enhancements of information and communication technology.

In 2009/10 there are 17 new major school building projects, and works will continue on 38 major school building works.

The funding provided in the 2009/10 Budget includes additional funding towards the implementation of the election commitments of the NSW Government.

We are continuing to implement the projects in our *Building Better Schools* initiative, including:

- upgrading science laboratories at 159 schools
- enhancing food technology facilities at 32 schools
- constructing 29 school halls
- building 18 multi-purpose gymnasiums
- upgrading 200 toilet facilities
- and installing security fences at a further 200 schools.

The 2009/10 Budget includes funding for 42 new security fences including at the following schools:

- Lightning Ridge Central School
- Mount St Thomas Public School
- Cessnock East Public School
- Bowraville Central School
- Normanhurst Boys High School
- Narranderra Public School

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM (cont'd)

- Milperra Public School
- Oatley West Public School; and
- The Hills Sports High School

There will be toilet upgrades renovation of toilet facilities at 63 schools including:

- Belmont High School
- Lethbridge Park Public School
- The Oakes Public School; and
- Auburn Girls High School

The 2009/10 Budget also includes funding for the upgrade of 14 food technology units.

Schools to benefit include:

- Moorefields Girls High School
- James Meehan High School
- Plumpton High School
- Cowra High School; and
- Balranald Central School.

There is also funding for 12 new trade schools including at the following locations:

- Randwick TAFE
- Wollongong TAFE
- Maitland TAFE; and
- Chifley College, Bidwill Campus.

Our 2009/10 Minor Capital Works Program has an allocation of over \$340 million for the upgrading of student and teacher facilities, continuation of air cooling projects, the purchase of computers for schools, as well as the Commonwealth Government's Digital Education Revolution and Trade Training Centres initiatives.

The NSW Government is also investing close to \$99 million in 2009/10 for capital works projects in TAFE colleges. In addition, 13 new major works projects at an estimated cost of \$31 million will commence in 2009/10.

In 2009/10 \$48 million of works will continue in TAFE colleges on 27 major works projects commenced in previous years at an estimated cost of \$155 million.

This substantial investment in public education infrastructure continues to support the provision of new and improved facilities for schools, TAFE and related services.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAM (cont'd)**

In addition, in February 2009 the Commonwealth Government announced a new \$16.2 billion infrastructure investment in schools across Australia as part of the \$42 billion Nation Building and Jobs Plan.

This funding is a significant contribution to assist in improving the condition of our school facilities.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### TRADE SCHOOLS

Question 2 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING –TRADE SCHOOLS - The Hon. Christine Robertson to the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

What is the progress of the Government's election commitment to establish Trade Schools across New South Wales

#### ANSWER:

The Government's trade schools initiative is designed to deliver broader opportunities and choices for young people...and tackle local skills shortages.

It's part of our commitment to offering all young people at school an education that is relevant and engaging so that they want to stay at school, because we know this will give them the best start in life.

The Government is establishing 25 trade schools across the State over five years. The program is running to schedule.

Three trade schools opened in 2007 at Ballina on the North Coast, Glendale in the Hunter, and Colyton in Western Sydney.

Another six trade schools opened in 2008. They are located at:

- Campbelltown TAFE;
- Queanbeyan High School;
- St George TAFE;
- Wyong TAFE;
- Tamworth TAFE; and
- Nambucca Heads High School.

This year, we have opened new trade schools at:

- Sutherland TAFE – at Loftus and Gynea;
- Jamison High School;
- Griffith TAFE; and
- Shellharbour TAFE.

A further eight trade schools will open in 2010. They will be located at:

# MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

### TRADE SCHOOLS (cont'd)

- Brisbane Water Secondary College, Woy Woy Campus;
- Canobolas Rural Technology High School;
- Hunter River High School;
- Maitland TAFE;
- Meadowbank TAFE;
- Randwick TAFE;
- Wetherill Park TAFE; and
- Wollongong TAFE.

In 2011 the remaining four trade schools will open at:

- Dubbo College Senior Campus;
- Wyndham College;
- Chifley College; and
- Kingscliff TAFE.

Each trade school specialises in one or more areas where there is local industry demand. These specialisations include construction, electrotechnology, metal and engineering, commercial cookery, and health services.

The NSW trade schools initiative is cost effective. It builds on existing infrastructure by locating trade schools in government high schools and TAFE colleges.

The Government has allocated \$31.2 million in capital expenditure to the 25 trade schools to ensure students have access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for their trade training.

The NSW Government's trade schools initiative has been welcomed by key NSW employers, including Australian Business Limited, the Housing Industry Association and the NRMA.

Students have the option of undertaking a school based apprenticeship or traineeship, or another vocational course, while completing their Higher School Certificate.

Apprentices undertake the first year of their apprenticeship while they are at school and complete their apprenticeship after finishing school. Trainees complete their program at the end of Year 12 and gain a Certificate II level qualification. School based apprentices and trainees are on-the-job for around one day each week. For the rest of the week, these students complete the off-the-job component of their training, as well as their other HSC subjects.

To support students and employers, we have introduced the Independent Industry Support Service, which brokers arrangements for apprenticeships and traineeships.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING****QUESTION ON NOTICE****TRADE SCHOOLS (cont'd)**

We know parents and students have welcomed Trade Schools - enrolments have been growing constantly since the program began. I have been advised that during this year there will be more than 4500 school students enrolled in Trade Schools. I was pleased to learn that this will include nearly 350 school-based trainees and over a hundred school-based apprentices.

Other trade school students are enrolled in vocational education and training in schools programs, known as VET in Schools. Students do not have to attend a trade school to undertake VET in schools. We have VET in schools programs across the state.

In 2008, 55,271 students in NSW schools undertook one or more HSC vocational courses. This means that more than a third of all Year 11 and 12 students included vocational courses as part of their Higher School Certificate.

NSW has been at the forefront of VET in schools, with high employer support for the program.

Currently, around 30,000 employers in small businesses have shown their willingness to assist young people. We have around 18,000 employers involved at any one time. This is a testament to the commitment of employers in NSW, who are prepared to get involved in helping our young people complete their training.

Research by the University of Melbourne... gives a ringing endorsement of the value of our VET in schools program. These findings indicate that, two years after graduation, an impressive 96.5 per cent of government school students who had studied a vocational course were engaged in either work or study or both.

The NSW Government recognises that where young people are supported to engage fully in education and training skilled employment or a combination of these options they are more likely to have a secure economic future, greater personal well-being, and to contribute positively to the community.

That's why we are focusing on improving student retention by helping students become more engaged in their learning.

We are providing curriculum choice to help keep schools relevant for all students. We are also providing students with the courses they want to study, to give them a head start on their careers.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### SKILLS SHORTAGES

Question 3 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – SKILLS SHORTAGES - The Hon. Christine Robertson to the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

How is the NSW Government responding to industry and community concerns about skills shortages?

#### ANSWER:

Despite recent changes in our economy, skills shortages continue to exist. The NSW Government is committed to creating training opportunities and overcoming skills shortages.

That's why we are maintaining our training levels and skills for industry, so we are in good shape now and for the future. We are addressing skills shortages by attracting young people into trade related and skill shortage areas.

We are establishing 25 trade schools.

We are helping young people to stay engaged in schooling through our outstanding vocational education and training in schools program.

We are helping retrenched workers retrain, so they gain the skills industry needs and so they can get back into work.

We are providing nearly 6,000 TAFE places in skills shortage areas...under the *Learning Guarantee* for young people up to the age of 18 who did not complete Year 12 and do not have a job.

The Premier has committed the Government to employing an additional 1,000 apprentices a year over four years. We have already exceeded our target for 2009.

And, as we have rolled out the contracts for Building the Education Revolution, we have required all our contractors to make sure that 20 per cent of trade work is performed by apprentices.

I was pleased to learn that we are doing this in all construction contracts across the NSW public service.

## **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **SKILLS SHORTAGES (cont'd)**

We are also putting in place skill development strategies to ensure that our workforce has the skills and knowledge, and to support the transition to a low carbon and more sustainable economy.

In the next 10 years, we can expect to see 230,000 to 340,000 new jobs in transport, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and mining. Because these industries have large environmental footprints, greening them will make an enormous difference.

There is also a huge amount of work to be done in greening jobs in the "built environment", because almost all the energy used in the giant commercial and services sector of the economy is associated with buildings.

Over four years from July 2009, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water are jointly implementing the \$20 million program - Energy Efficiency Training for Trades and Professionals.

This Program was announced on Day 2 of the Premier's Job Summit.

It will support the \$150 million NSW Energy Efficiency Strategy by ensuring the NSW workforce has the skills needed to enhance energy efficiencies in industry, government and the general community.

The NSW Government is also funding the inclusion of sustainability in vocational qualifications.

We're setting aside money to give trainers - including TAFE teachers - the knowledge they need to deliver 'green' skills.

By 2018, hundreds of thousands of workers will have gained a real understanding of sustainability and its application to their jobs.

At the heart of this is training, and TAFE NSW plays a vital role. TAFE Institutes deliver training in new and sustainable technologies, and in renewable energy systems.

All these initiatives will assist our graduates to be more adaptable to changes in their industries, and to ensure that green skills are part of every industry and every occupation.

Recently, the Prime Minister stated his wish to see Australia become the most highly skilled economy on the globe. In NSW, we recognise the importance of attaining higher level qualifications. We are establishing diploma and advanced diploma traineeships and apprenticeships in areas of industry demand.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**SKILLS SHORTAGES (cont'd)**

NSW is also implementing the Productivity Places Program, which is delivering 175,000 training places for jobseekers and existing workers. This includes funding for at least 28,000 traineeship places by 2012. All of these places are in high priority skill areas, and I am expecting the announcement of the successful training organisations shortly.

The NSW Government is working together with industries, employers and individual learners, to prepare for the upturn we know is coming. At the heart of this is our commitment to apprenticeships, traineeships and vocational education and training.

We are ensuring that our State has a highly skilled workforce, so we can grasp opportunities as the economy improves.

Over the past year, the National Centre for Vocational Education Research confirmed that NSW is driving growth in quality apprenticeships and traineeships. NSW apprentice and trainee commencements grew at a rate two and a half times that of the rest of the nation.

In the past year, NSW contributed 58% of the growth in completions across all states and territories. That's why we say that NSW is training the nation.

However, we are also well aware of the impact of the current financial crisis. We are looking after apprentices and trainees affected by the global financial crisis through the Continuing Apprentices Placement Service.

This service helps out-of-trade apprentices find new employers to complete their apprenticeship, and to date we have helped over 170 apprentices find new jobs.

The Rees Government in NSW is making sure that when the economy takes off again, our state will be prepared, with skilled trades people ready for work.

**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **CREATIVE STUDENTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**

Question 4 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING –  
PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOLS - The Hon. Christine Robertson to the  
Minister for Education and Training –

#### **QUESTION**

How is the Government investing in the future of creative students in Western Sydney?

#### **ANSWER:**

In September this year I had the pleasure of accompanying the Premier on a visit to his former high school in Northmead, which was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. While addressing the school assembly, the Premier announced the creation of two new creative and performing arts high schools in Western Sydney.

From next year, Northmead High School and Nepean High Schools will join Campbelltown High School as specialist arts high schools, creating a network of three in the region a total of eight across NSW. What this means for our students is that there will be more creative opportunities for around 1400 students in Western Sydney.

We know that senior students are increasingly choosing to study performing arts subjects for their Higher School Certificate, and that Western Sydney is an area of rapid growth and cultural diversity. The NSW Government is responding to that demand. This is about delivering a clever and a creative state here in NSW.

We will invest in these schools to provide creative opportunities for students who want to train and pursue a career in the arts. They will offer creative and performing arts programs, catering for students in the Parramatta and Penrith regions in areas such as dance, drama and music, while they also study the core curriculum.

Both of these schools were an obvious choice given their strong history in delivering a successful performing arts curriculum. Northmead High School has developed a strong creative and performing arts program over the last 15 years, which has seen hundreds of talented students further hone their artistic skills.

Nepean High School also has a long history of teaching performing arts and associated extracurricular activities that involve nearby primary schools.

The NSW Government is committed to providing Northmead and Nepean High Schools with the resources they need to make the transition to performing arts high schools.

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**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**CREATIVE STUDENTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY (cont'd)**

We are looking at the assets and resources currently available at the two high schools and are dedicated to providing additional resources and capital expenditure to bring these schools to a performing arts standard.

The scope of any additional capital works required to make the transition will be negotiated with the school and community and may include:

- Movement studios with retractable seating
- Attached support spaces, such as a control room, change rooms and store rooms; and
- A performance teaching space with operable wall, which would enable the room to be divided into two smaller teaching spaces.

The recruitment of specialist teachers and the curriculum will also be considered.

We will also build on the existing relationships these schools have with their local arts institutions to ensure students have access to professional artists and companies.

The establishment of these two new creative and performing arts high schools has been warmly welcomed by Sydney's leading performing arts companies as an extension of their existing performance and skills programs in Western Sydney.

The Member for Penrith and Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Training Karyn Paluzzano, has also announced a working party to explore links between the arts community and the new Nepean Arts High School of Creative and Performing Arts.

The Penrith and Blue Mountains area has a long history of providing performing arts curriculum and a strong community involvement in promoting and producing the performing arts across the region. The region also has strong links with the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, Penrith Conservatorium of Music, Penrith Regional Art Gallery and the Q Theatre.

This working party will investigate how we can further strengthen these relationships for the benefit of students at Nepean High. It will comprise representatives of the NSW Department of Education, Nepean High School, Arts NSW and the Penrith performing and creative arts community, focusing on establishing formal links with the arts community in Penrith and canvas available support within the community.

**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### PROVISION OF SPECIAL NEEDS IN SCHOOLS

#### QUESTION

6 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – Provision of SPECIAL NEEDS in schools – Dr J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training, and Minister for Women –

a. What is the average recurrent cost of educating a student with a disability in NSW? For each of the major special need type for the year 2008/09 please provide:

- i. The number of students with that special need (averaged over the year)
- ii. The total funding provided in support of that special need:
- iii. In mainstream schools
- iv. In schools for special purposes

b. Please provide the new information in report of the forward estimate for 2009/10.

c. For all pairs and triplets of the major special needs types, please provide the following data in report of the year 2008/09:

- i. The number of students (averaged over the year) with multiple special needs.
- ii. Total funding in support of students holding all of those special needs.
- iii. Total funding in support of students holding all of those special needs:
  1. In respect of students in mainstream schools.
  2. In respect of students in schools for special needs purposes.

#### ANSWER

(a) i., ii., iii., and iv.

The New South Wales Government has allocated more than \$1.106 billion for special education in the 2009/2010 financial year. This is \$51 million more than the previous financial year and represents more than 11 percent of the Education budget.

Students with disabilities can be integrated into mainstream classes, educated in support classes in mainstream schools or attend special schools. These options are guided by the choices parents make about how and where they want their child educated and are entrenched in disability legislation.

The Government is strongly supportive of students who have additional learning needs, including students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools. The department's *Integration, Funding Support Program* is providing more than \$94.6 million in 2009 to schools across the state. These funds support more than 14,800 students who are enrolled full time in regular classes in New South Wales public schools. This is an increase of \$7.6 million from the previous year.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**PROVISION OF SPECIAL NEEDS IN SCHOOLS**

The *Learning Assistance Program* provides support for students experiencing difficulties in learning, regardless of cause. This program currently has a budget of \$134 million and provides 1,378 support teachers learning assistance across the state. Schools are supported at a regional level by designated specialist support staff who work with support teachers learning assistance and other school staff to provide additional program support for students with higher levels of need.

Students with special needs may be supported in special classes in regular or special schools; through the *Integration, Funding Support Program*; by specialist itinerant or outreach teachers; or through the *Learning Assistance Program*.

While some of these programs require the confirmation of a disability, some do not, making it impossible to provide specific and comprehensive data for all students.

I am able to provide specific advice about the number of students with confirmed disabilities in key disability areas who are supported through the department's programs in regular and special schools.

There are more than 6,300 students with autism; more than 7,300 students with mental health issues; more than 1,700 students with a physical disability; more than 13,000 students with an intellectual disability; and more than 2,400 with a sensory impairment.

Each of these students may require a different level of support and funding.

(b) The establishment, disestablishment and relocation of classes and positions are part of the annual process of regional planning involving ongoing analysis of enrolments, demand for and location of special education services as well as consultation with parents and relevant school communities. The department is currently liaising with regions about the number of students with special needs requiring support for 2009/2010.

The Government's commitment to Special Education, consistent with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) supports parent choice about how and where they want their child educated. Parent choice is a major factor in the increase in the number of support provisions required in regular and special schools.

Other factors have contributed to the increase in the support required for 2010, including: the legislation which takes effect from January 2010, raising the school leaving age for all students in NSW; an increase in the number of students with Autism in response to earlier and increased diagnoses; and an increase in the number of young families in some areas of the state with children with disabilities requiring specialist support.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**PROVISION OF SPECIAL NEEDS IN SCHOOLS**

(c) The department collects data relating to students with multiple disabilities through the *Integration, Funding Support Program*.

- i. Through the *Integration, Funding Support Program* 1,350 students are identified with more than one special need /disability.
- ii. The total amount of additional funding for these students is \$12,690,000
- iii. These students are all in regular classes in mainstream schools



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

### COMPLAINTS ABOUT BER

Question 7 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - COMPLAINTS ABOUT BER – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

How many complaints have you received so far?

Apart from the number of complaints, could you tell us about the content of those complaints? What are they about?

#### ANSWER

I am advised by the Department of Education and Training that they have not received any complaints through the formal complaints mechanism.

The formal complaints mechanism is via a dedicated BER website [www.ber.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ber.nsw.gov.au). Formal complaints are directed to a dedicated email address, from where they will be directed to the person or team most appropriate to respond to the complaint.

The website also offers a mailing address for written complaints, as well as links to the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the NSW Ombudsman.

The BER Program Office is set up to provide ongoing support to schools in managing issues with their BER projects, including using school Principals seconded into the Program Office. There is constant telephone contact with school Principals. The Program Office also assists in responding to Ministerial and Departmental correspondence about school issues.

My office has also received written representations from Members of Parliament, staff and members of school communities raising concerns or queries regarding the Building the Education Revolution. These have been separately provided to the Legislative Council under the terms of a Standing Order dated 23 September 2009.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**WHICH SCHOOLS HAVE NOT STARTED BER PROJECTS**

Question 8 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - WHICH SCHOOLS HAVE NOT STARTED BER PROJECTS – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

Which schools have not started?

**ANSWER**

Work has started or been completed at every eligible school in NSW as part of the National School Pride component of Building the Education Revolution.

A list of those schools where construction had started under the Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century component of Building the Education Revolution was tabled at the committee meeting. All primary schools not on that list had not started construction at that date.

No construction work has started on schools under the Science and Language Centres for 21st Century Secondary Schools component of Building the Education Revolution.

Overall the program is well on track to meet the tight timetable for completion set by the Commonwealth Government.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHERS**

**QUESTION**

9 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHERS – Reverend the Hon. G. K. M Moyes MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training, and Minister for Women -

- (a) Can you provide an update on the number of schools where special needs teachers have already been appointed?
- (b) I have been going around public schools checking and have had some response. What funding has been allocated for the provision of special computer education equipment that aids children with learning difficulties?

**ANSWER**

- (a) In the November 2008 mini-budget the NSW Government approved an additional \$9.3 million to support students with special needs and their teachers. These funds have provided the equivalent of an additional 80 full time specialist teacher positions in 265 schools across the state in 2009.

These specialist teachers are providing support for students with complex additional learning needs, including students with autism and other learning and behavioural difficulties.

- (b) For 2009 more than \$1.6 million was allocated to public schools in New South Wales for the purchase of specialised technology to support students with additional learning needs.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### PROVISIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

#### QUESTION

10 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – PROVISIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION – Reverend the Hon. G. K. M Moyes MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training, and Minister for Women -

- (a) Although the special mini-budget allocated an extra \$90 million for new teachers, can you explain why 800 principals in the public schools have criticised the provision of special needs education as poor and very poor? Can the Minister, or can you, Director-General, please indicate when these 800 principals will receive extra funding?
- (b) Could you update me in response to a question on notice about what is happening in that area?

#### ANSWER

(a) and (b)

The Government is spending a record \$1.106 billion on special education this financial year, which represents more than 11 percent of the Education budget.

Students with disabilities can be integrated into mainstream classes, educated in support classes in mainstream schools or attend special schools. These choices are guided by the choices parents make about how and where they want their child educated.

Students with moderate to severe disabilities across NSW enrolled in regular classes are supported by an allocation of more than \$94.6 million through the *Integration, Funding Support Program*.

Students with learning difficulties, including students with a mild intellectual disability, are supported through the \$134 million *Learning Assistance Program*. This program provides 1,378 specialist support teachers to support to students with learning difficulties.

In schools with support classes for students with special needs, staffing levels are determined on the basis of the educational needs of each student with a disability. Principals are able to form classes to support the differing needs of students.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**PROVISIONS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**

Each support class has a teacher and a school learning support officer. This means there are 2 adults in every support class which range in size between 6 children and 18 children.

In the November 2008 mini-budget the NSW Government approved an additional \$9.3 million to support students with special needs and their teachers. These funds have provided the equivalent of an additional 80 full time specialist teacher positions in 265 schools across the state in 2009. These specialist teachers are providing support for students with complex additional learning needs, including students with autism and other learning and behavioural difficulties.

The Department of Education and Training is considering expanding this initiative, to build on its strengths, together with the strengths of the Learning Assistance Program, and form a new model of support for students with additional learning needs and their classroom teachers.

The proposal for the School Learning Support Program has been the subject of extensive and on-going consultation with principal, parent and community, advocacy and union groups.

The consultation will continue until the middle of next year. This next phase of the consultation will include a trial of the program. The department will also disseminate information to school groups during this period about the indicative amounts of funding that they would receive under this proposed model.

No decisions about the program will be made until further feedback from parents, teachers and principals has been considered and the department has assessed the outcomes of the trial.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

# MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

### PURCHASING EQUIPMENT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Question 11 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING -  
PURCHASING EQUIPMENT FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS – Reverend the Hon. G. K. M.  
Moyes MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

Could you also take the following question on notice? I have been going into areas raising funds to purchase equipment for public schools and also to pay for the on-servicing of computerised equipment. When will the department take full responsibility for that so that I do not have to be doing it?

#### ANSWER

The 2009-10 State Budget for public schools includes recurrent and capital funding for public school education of over \$11.6 billion, an increase of over 31 per cent on the previous year's budget. This Budget incorporates provision for additional funding for major education initiatives.

The average recurrent funding per public school student in 2009-10 is \$12,316, the highest per capita amount in the history of public education in this State. This is up from \$5,273 in 1994-95, an increase of almost 134 per cent.

All NSW government schools are provided with annual global funding allocations from which they are expected to meet the cost of school operations. Global funding allocations are based on a combination of historical and formula based information, with consideration given to the relative size of each school, staff and student numbers and a range of special factors that cater for schools with unique circumstances.

In addition, schools are provided with substantial resources in the form of staffing, physical facilities and technological infrastructure. Funding is also provided for targeted programs in areas such as technology, literacy and numeracy, vocational education and services that address equity considerations.

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for the funding of public schools; however the efforts of parent and community groups in their support of the public school system are greatly appreciated. The fundraising activities undertaken by all public school Parents and Citizens Associations and the Reverend the Hon Gordon Moyes are appreciated and provide a valuable source of funding which can be applied to local educational initiatives.



**Verity Firth MP**

**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

Question 12 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING -  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS – The Hon. C.  
E. Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

Is that government schools (more than 3,000 international students enrolled in New South Wales schools, an increase of 8.8% on the same period last year)?

**ANSWER:**

There are currently over 3,000 international students enrolled in NSW government primary and secondary schools. TAFE NSW has a further 6,000 international students, including those studying English language.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### BER PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS

Question 13 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - PROJECT MANAGEMENT COSTS – The Hon. C. E. Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

Minister, why won't you give us the dollar figure? If we are talking of a sum in the order of \$90 million, it is not unreasonable for the Opposition to ask, and for the public to expect to know, what the number is and what the budget is.

#### ANSWER

The Commonwealth Government has approved project funding of close to \$3.423 billion for NSW public schools as part of the Building the Education Revolution program.

<b>Building the Education Revolution Element</b>	<b>Project Funding</b>
Primary Schools for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century (P21)	\$2,984,100,000
Science and Language Centres for 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Secondary Schools (SLC)	\$150,808,043
National School Pride (NSP)	\$287,525,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,422,433,043</b>

As part of the package the Commonwealth Government provided 1.5% in addition to the funding for schools to pay for overall program management. This does not come out of any school's budget. It pays for the staff dedicated to managing the program strategy, planning, coordinating the funding applications, delivery, review of value for money and reporting. This program management allocation is in the order of \$51.34 million.

In regard to project management costs, the estimate for the program is based on a 4% average of project funding, which is in the order of \$119.36 million. This covers procurement of projects including scope and nomination management, planning and the co-ordination of supplies. These are modest figures – in comparison the Investing in our Schools Program allowed 10% of the budget for project management fees.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**NON-PARTICIPATION IN NAPLAN**

Question 14 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - NON-PARTICIPATION IN NAPLAN – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

We are talking specifically about the number of students who are not exempted and do not sit the test. Is it true that on average a number of schools—I do not want you to identify any particular school—have had a substantial increase in the non-participation rate?

**ANSWER**

Non-participation across NSW in 2009 NAPLAN was 3.2%, down from 4.4% in 2008.

In 2009 NAPLAN there were 13 schools with 10% or more *increased* non-participation rate compared to 2008 NAPLAN. This included 4 non-government schools and 9 government schools.

In 2009 NAPLAN there were 56 schools with 10% or more *decreased* non-participation rate compared to 2008 NAPLAN. This included 11 non-government schools and 46 government schools.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**NAPLAN PARTICIPATION RATES IN 2008/09**

Question 15 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - NAPLAN PARTICIPATION RATES IN 2008/09 – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

We are interested not so much in the average participation rate but in the participation rate in a number of schools. Without identifying any schools, could you provide us with a list of participation rates in each test in 2008 and 2009 for those schools where there has been a substantial increase in non-participation?

**ANSWER**

In 2009 NAPLAN there were 13 schools with 10% or more increased non-participation rate compared to 2008 NAPLAN. This included 4 non-government schools and 9 government schools.

SCHOOL	Non Participation %	
	2008	2009
School 1	21.4	68.4
School 2	18.8	50
School 3	30.1	54.8
School 4	49.5	71.6
School 5	6.2	26.3
School 6	2.8	16.7
School 7	2.9	16.7
School 8	6.7	20
School 9	7.6	20.4
School 10	0.7	13
School 11	13.3	25
School 12	2	13.1
School 13	25.9	36.4

One of the schools with very high non-participation withdrew most students at the parents' request. Five of the remaining schools are distance education centres with students overseas. Two others are intensive English centres who have highly transient populations, hence the numbers listed as enrolled are not necessarily enrolled there at the time of the test. Many others in these schools are exempt for reason of being in Australia for less than 12 months.

In 2009 NAPLAN there were 56 schools with 10% or more *decreased* non-participation rate compared to 2008 NAPLAN. This included 11 non-government schools and 46 government schools.

  
**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**BER - NSP PROGRAM AND GST FUNDS**

Question 16 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - BER- NSP PROGRAM AND GST FUNDS – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

Can we move now to the National School Pride Program, in particular the goods and services tax, the GST, associated with national school pride funding, and in particular those schools that have either chosen or pushed to spend their funding on the backlog of maintenance. Those schools are managing their own projects and can claim GST and should have some additional funds to spend. For example, for a school that has 300 students—no, I will not go to those figures because they are too complex. Let us go to the schools that should have got the GST. Is it correct that you took the GST?

**ANSWER**

The GST has not been taken.

The approved Australian Government funding for the National School Pride element of the Building the Education Revolution program provided to each State and Territory is GST exclusive.

Where schools are locally managing their National School Pride projects, the funding provided by the Australian Government is transferred to those schools exclusive of GST. When these schools or the Department procures goods or services, payments made to suppliers include the GST. The GST amount is then recovered by the school or Department from the Australian Government in their monthly Business Activity Statement (BAS) submission.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**LAPTOP TRIAL - EVALUATION**

Question 17 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - LAPTOP TRIAL - EVALUATION – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

In relation to the roll-out of laptop netbooks, will you provide details of the evaluations of the two-week trial?

Was there an evaluation? Were reports furnished?

**ANSWER**

The two-week test drive at Cherrybrook Technology High School, Arthur Phillip High School and Denison College at Bathurst from 25 May to 5 June was evaluated and a report published.

The report was presented to the Program Control Group 17 July 2009 and published on the Digital Education Revolution – NSW intranet website.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**LAPTOP TRIAL - DAMAGE TO LAPTOPS**

Question 18 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - LAPTOP TRIAL - DAMAGE TO LAPTOPS – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

Out of that information about the trial, can you tell us other information apart from the technical aspects? Were any laptops lost or damaged?

That is not disputed, but I want to know the results of the trial and how that went because, obviously, you would use that. Not just about whether the boxes arrived, but what happened with the netbooks.

**ANSWER**

The test drive evaluated all aspects of the program.

Only one screen was broken during the test drive, probably due to the screen being accidentally closed onto a sharp object such as a pencil-sharpener. The only other breakages were to the metallic covers on the hinges. No laptops were stolen.

The manufacturer has changed their production process in order to make the metal hinge cover more robust.

Plastic covers are provided with the laptops to give additional protection.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**LAPTOPS - SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES**

Question 19 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - LAPTOPS - SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

With netbooks can students access social networking sites?

I asked about the trials because I imagine you would have assessed whether that was working or not when they came backwards and forwards. I would like the information on that assessment as well, if you would not mind please.

**ANSWER**

Students are currently unable to access social networking sites on Digital Education Revolution – NSW laptops.

Consultation is currently taking place to gather views about whether or not the Internet filtering should be adjusted when students are outside of the school network to allow them access to selected social networking and media sharing sites. Should any changes be made, there would be an education program developed on cyber safety and privacy so as to educate students about their responsibilities as cyber citizens.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS**

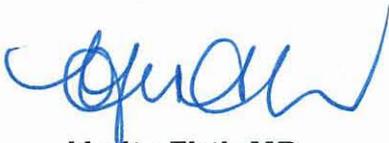
Question 20 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS – The Hon. R. M. Parker (Chair) to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

On Internet access, Premier Nathan Rees promised that half of the State's public high schools would have wireless Internet connections by mid 2009. How many have wireless Internet connections?

**ANSWER**

315 government secondary and central schools have had wireless Internet connections installed, with a further 111 installations currently underway.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### BER INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS

Question 21 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO CONTRACTORS – The Hon. C. E. Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

- a) The incentive payments that you referred to in your answer, what is the budget for those?
- b) I understand the purpose of the payment. I am trying to understand the payment, and I am throwing guesses at you. It would be great to get more information on your guess of what you might be looking at. In the meantime I am just guessing. Can you hazard a guess?

#### ANSWER

The contract with the Managing Contractors, who are managing the delivery of Primary Schools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century projects across the regions, includes an incentive fee. Subject to the performance criteria set out in the contract relating to completion of projects on time and within cost parameters, a Managing Contractor may be entitled to an incentive payment.

The incentive payment is only available when the managing contractor delivers under the benchmark range for the project and in advance of the scheduled completion date. Managing contractors are being given incentive to finish early. Finishing early means more money flowing into the economy now when it is needed.

This is the largest capital works program ever undertaken in schools in NSW. The incentive payment has made it possible to pass on budgetary risks and insure the State against default on the program. This incentive regime also underpins our partnership approach to delivering value for money throughout the program.

The tendered incentive fees across the seven Managing Contractors range from 1 percent to 3.25 percent. The tender process was designed to ensure that the incentive fee was kept low. If all Managing Contractors met the incentive fee criteria, this component will represent an average of 1.68 percent of the approved project funding of \$2.984 billion.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## **MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **QUESTION ON NOTICE**

#### **BER - ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM**

Question 22 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM – The Hon. C. E. Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### **QUESTION**

Do you have a flow chart that explains the administration of the program?

#### **ANSWER**

The Integrated Program Office administers the Primary Schools for the 21st Century (P21) program, alongside the other components of the Building the Education Revolution program for public schools in NSW. It is funded from two sources:

- The Commonwealth Government provides funding of 1.5% on top of the funding provided for individual projects, to cover the costs of overall program management, program strategy, planning, reporting, undertaking the funding application process and coordinating program delivery.
- Also 1.3% of the funding for each P21 project is used to cover the costs of managing the procurement of projects, including contract administration, scope and nomination management, variations process and assisting with reporting to the Commonwealth Government and NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce. It also enables the Integrated program Office to monitor costs on each school project from start to finish ensuring best value is achieved on every project.

The delivery of the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program in each region is managed by the Managing Contractors.

Copies of BER bulletins which set out in detail the administration of the program have been separately provided to the Legislative Council under the terms of a Standing Order 52 request dated 23 September 2009.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**BER - ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM (cont'd)**

<b>BER Source of Funds - Government Schools Projects Approved by Commonwealth Government</b>				
<b>Project Allocations</b>	<b>P21</b>	<b>NSP</b>	<b>SLC</b>	<b>BER Total</b>
Round 1 NSP & P21	\$385,950,000	\$178,350,000		\$564,300,000
Round 2 NSP & P21	\$1,601,961,000	\$108,700,000		\$1,710,661,000
Round 3 P21	\$994,039,000			\$994,039,000
P21 Variations	\$2,150,000			\$2,150,000
NSP Supplementary Round		\$425,000		\$425,000
NSP Variation with Bilateral Funding Agreement		\$50,000		\$50,000
SLC			\$150,808,043	\$150,808,043
<b>Total - Project Allocations</b>	<b>\$2,984,100,000</b>	<b>\$287,525,000</b>	<b>\$150,808,043</b>	<b>\$3,422,433,043</b>
Administration (1.5%)	\$44,761,500	\$4,312,875	\$2,262,121	\$51,336,496
<b>Total Allocations</b>	<b>\$3,028,861,500</b>	<b>\$291,837,875</b>	<b>\$153,070,164</b>	<b>\$3,473,769,539</b>
Updated 2 October 2009				



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**BER - AUDIT TEAM**

Question 23 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - BER - AUDIT TEAM – The Hon. C. E. Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

- a) How many staff are you employing in the special audit spot squads?
- b) How many positions will there be in the IPO overall?

**ANSWER**

- a) Six staff are engaged in the Special Audit/Compliance section of the BER Integrated Program Office. Further audits of the BER Program are being undertaken by the Australian National Audit Office, NSW Audit Office, NSW Department of Education and Training's Internal Audit Directorate and the auditor appointed to the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce.
- b) The BER Integrated Program Office has 180 positions as at the end of September 2009. It must be noted that the number of positions changes at different stages of the overall program, with the number of positions being higher in the application, planning and early delivery phase.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### (TAFE - FUNDING FOR EQUITY PROGRAMS)

Question 24 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - TAFE - FUNDING FOR EQUITY PROGRAMS – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

I start by looking at the TAFE restructuring program *Doing Business in the 21st Century*, and in particular what has happened to the equity units—the multicultural unit, the disabilities unit, the outreach unit and the gender equality unit. These, of course, have all been disbanded as central units. Can you give details of how these equity programs are now co-ordinated statewide, and how are they funded? Has there been a net reduction in funding, or how are those funds delivered?

#### ANSWER

Through the *Doing Business in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* project, TAFE NSW has ensured that it has more capacity and resources available for front-line delivery in Institutes, including for equity programs.

TAFE has adopted a social inclusion model of delivery for equity support services. The new Social Inclusion and Vocational Access Unit focuses on holistic analysis of social disadvantage and integrated responses across the range of services offered by specialist equity staff in Institutes.

The Unit has three senior specialist positions, Manager Disabilities, Manager Cultural Diversity and Manager Partnerships and Workforce Participation. The Manager Partnerships and Workforce Participation position incorporates the roles previously undertaken by the Outreach and Corrections Unit but with a stronger focus on employment outcomes.

The Unit's role includes liaising with external agencies, community and peak equity groups to promote TAFE capability; developing and strengthening partnerships with organisations such as universities, peak equity groups, community sectors, and state and federal departments; and providing input and advice about the participation and outcomes of equity groups in TAFE.

Around 260 staff in TAFE Institutes provide specialist expertise and targeted service delivery to equity groups, working in close collaboration with local communities and advocacy groups. Institute Outreach coordinator positions remain unchanged.

The TAFE Equity Committee remains the key forum for sharing best practice and identifying new and emerging national and state developments. It is chaired by an Institute Director and membership includes the equity managers from the Social Inclusion and Vocational Access Unit and other senior managers from Institutes.

There has been no reduction in funding.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

## MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### QUESTION ON NOTICE

#### STUDENTS IN OUT OF HOME CARE

Question 25 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - STUDENTS IN OUT OF HOME CARE – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

#### QUESTION

Can we now move to another group of disadvantaged students, and can we talk about the students who are in out-of-home care in public education? You will be aware of the Cashmore and Paxman longitudinal study of two years ago, and that 42 per cent of out-of-home students in care complete their HSC, compared to 80 per cent of the general population state-wide. How many of the 10 regions have had an out-of-home care co-ordinator appointed?

#### ANSWER

Under *Keep Them Safe: A Shared Approach to Child Wellbeing* ten out of home care coordinators will be established to coordinate work with other regional staff to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people in out of home care.

Considerable work has been conducted in developing their role and responsibilities and their interrelationship with the other regional staff who support students in out of home care.

The out of home care coordinators will be recruited and appointed before the end of this year and it is planned for all positions to be in place for the start of the 2010 school year.



**Verity Firth MP**

**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**OUT OF HOME CARE SUPPORT TEACHERS**

Question 26 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - OUT OF HOME CARE SUPPORT TEACHERS – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

What I want to ask is: what is the future of the out-of-home care support teachers, who are different from the co-ordinators, as you are aware? What is the relationship between the co-ordinators and the teachers? And will you be increasing the number of out-of-home care support teachers?

**ANSWER**

Out-of-home care teachers will continue to be available to provide support to teachers who have children and young people in out of home care in their class.

The working relationship between the coordinators and the out of home care teachers is obviously an important one. While out of home care teachers support classroom teachers, the regional Coordinator, Out of Home Care will undertake the coordination and monitoring of educational support for students living in out of home care and attending government schools.

Currently there is no plan to increase the number of out of home care teacher positions.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**(ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS & SOLAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM)**

Question 27 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING -  
ELECTRICITY PROVIDERS & SOLAR SCHOOLS PROGRAM – The Hon. C. E.  
Cusack MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

Does that include areas where electricity providers are reluctant to give permission for schools to switch on their solar systems?

**ANSWER**

Solar systems installed in schools under the National Schools Solar Program are centrally co-ordinated. This is to ensure the State's compliance to the Commonwealth funding requirements that solar generated electricity from the Program be able to be returned to the electricity grid.

Only those NSW schools whose electricity supplier's infrastructure is capable of bi-directional electricity feeds have been allocated grant money from the initial funding releases to install solar panels.

Continuing upgrade of meters by electricity providers means that by mid 2010 all schools should be able to supply solar generated electricity back to the NSW electricity grid.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE**

**CHOICES OF LIFE PROGRAM**

Question 28 - BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING - CHOICES OF LIFE PROGRAM – Dr. J. Kaye MLC to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

**QUESTION**

- a) Have you also looked at the Choices, Decisions, Outcomes program, which has links to GravityTeen and Real Choices Australia that has been accused of peddling the same sort of information as Choices of Life?
- b) In answering that question, can you provide detailed reasons as to why Choices of Life was banned?

**ANSWER**

- a) The Department of Education and Training has not conducted a review of the named program.
- b) A presentation entitled *The Wonder of Life (Before Birth)*, presented by the CEO of *Choices of Life Inc*, which had been authorised under the Department's Authorised Performances for Schools Program, was removed from the Department's website pending a review. The review related to possible irregularities in the assessment, authorisation and registration process.



**Verity Firth MP**  
**Minister for Education and Training**