

GRIMSHAW REPORT

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Mary Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH1): Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

What was the cost of the Grimshaw report, which went over a long period of time and which was commissioned by your Government?

Answer: The Grimshaw review went from October 2000 until May 2004. The cost of the Review in total was \$1.54 million.

BEHAVIOUR SCHOOLS

On Monday 4 September, 2006 the Hon Ms Lee Rhiannon, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH2): Ms Rhiannon to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Do you have numbers? My questions were: How many have reintegrated into mainstream high schools, how many have gone onto TAFE, how many have completed their school certificate, and how many have completed their Higher School Certificate? Can you supply those figures, or will you take that question on notice?

Answer: Behaviour schools will be evaluated in 2007 once the roll out of schools has been completed.

BEHAVIOUR SCHOOLS

On Monday 4 September, 2006 the Hon Ms Lee Rhiannon, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH3):

Ms Rhiannon to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

To help complete that picture - I appreciate that things are just getting going - can you give us the total enrolment for schools that have been established? I will also require a follow up on the figures that I have requested.

Answer:

By 2007 the Government will have established 35 Behaviour Schools, 40 Tutorial Centres and 22 Suspension centres to support students with behaviour problems. Overall, there will be more than 3500 specialist behaviour places available. This compares to 918 places in 1995 – almost four times as many.

All have small class sizes with a teacher and a teachers aide. In addition to specialist behaviour programs, all students do their regular class work.

BEHAVIOUR SCHOOLS

On Monday 4 September, 2006 the Hon Ms Lee Rhiannon, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH4):

Ms Rhiannon to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

It seems as though the majority are secondary school students. Why do you then have primary schoolteachers at these behaviour schools?

Answer:

Classroom teachers are appointed to positions in all schools, including ED/BD schools, based on the curriculum, educational and learning needs of students identified by the school.

TEACHER ACCREDITATION

On Monday 4 September, 2006 Reverend the Hon. F.J. Nile (Chair), MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH5):

Reverend Nile to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

I note in the budget papers in regard to the NSW Institute of Teachers that 10,500 teachers have been accredited. Are those teachers from both government and non-government schools?

Answer:

Yes. The Institute of Teachers Act 2004 and the Institute of Teachers Regulation 2005 requires the accreditation of all government and non-government school teachers who commence teaching in NSW after 1 October 2004.

JERRABOMERRA PRIMARY SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Mary Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH6):

Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Minister, the Jerrabomberra Primary School had 700 enrolments at May 2006 and 15 demountables. When it opened in 2002 it had six classrooms and around 200 students. Given that it anticipates 750 students next year, not including the impact of school closures in Canberra, are there any plans to fast-track permanent accommodation?

Answer:

Additional permanent classrooms (MDR buildings) are being installed at Jerrabomberra Public School during the 2006/07 financial year.

ACT SCHOOL CLOSURES

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH7):

Ms Cusack to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

How many students do you estimate are involved?

CHAIR: Will you take on notice then the number of New South Wales school students in the Australian Capital Territory, assuming that they will supply the information?

Answer:

The ACT Department of Education and Training has advised that, according to their August, 2006 census, there were 1,572 students resident in New South Wales attending ACT schools.

DORRIGO HIGH SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Mary Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH8):

Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Could you advise why Dorrigo High School does not attract funding under the Priority Schools Funding Program or the Country Areas Program?

Answer:

Dorrigo High School participated in the 2004 Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP) survey to determine the list of schools eligible for PSFP funding for the 2005-2008 funding quadrennium. Dorrigo High School had a scanned response rate of 99 per cent of the survey forms distributed to the families in the school community. This response rate was well above the rate required for statistical validity.

Analysis of the 2004 survey data from Dorrigo High School revealed that the socio-economic disadvantage of the school relative to other schools was not sufficient to include Dorrigo High School on the list of schools eligible for funding under the PSFP.

Compared to the fourteen schools in the Mid North Coast School Group that were eligible for PSFP support, the Dorrigo School community had:

- the lowest percentage of families with no-one in paid employment
- the second lowest percentage of families receiving a government pension
- the second lowest percentage of families with a single parent
- the highest percentage of families with all parents/carers working
- the highest average family occupational status
- the third highest average family educational status, and

DORRIGO HIGH SCHOOL (continued)

- a percentage of families where a parent is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent which was only two-thirds of the average.

The Country Areas Program (CAP) is designed to redress the effects of geographic isolation on the learning outcomes of students in government and non-government schools.

Criteria for inclusion of schools in CAP use three measures of isolation:

- distance from the primary school to the nearest centre of 10,000 persons or more, according to the ABS Census of Population and Housing
- population size measured by student enrolment K-6 in all primary schools, government and non-government, in the community, excluding students in special classes in regular schools or in schools for specific purposes (in recognition of the fact that these classes draw from outside the local area)
- school density which measures a community's isolation from other schools.

The list of Country Area Program (CAP) schools for 2005-2008 was determined in 2004. Cluster analysis is used to group 714 communities located outside of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong based on three factors of size, distance from a centre with a population of 10,000 or more and density of schools. The communities in the most isolated nine clusters are included in CAP.

Dorrigo is not in the first nine clusters. Dorrigo is in the 15th cluster.

DORRIGO HIGH SCHOOL (continued)

The eligibility of schools for the 2004-2008 funding period has been the subject of discussion and consultation with representatives of the CAP State Advisory Council (SAC). The SAC meets on a regular basis and its membership includes representatives from the Isolated Children's Parents' Association NSW, Federation of Parents and Citizens' Association of NSW, Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, Catholic Education Commission, Catholic Parents and officers of the Department of Education and Training.

The analysis will be undertaken during 2008 using the latest ABS data to create a list of CAP schools for 2009-2012. Dorrigo, along with other rural communities, will be included in that analysis.

GYMEA BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH9): Ms Cusack to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Can you tell the parents and students of the Gymea Bay Public School why there are no security fences, as promised, or an electrical upgrade to allow the school to function with the necessary technology?

Answer: Since 1996, the NSW Labor Government has installed more than 400 security fences in schools across the state. In 2006/07, a further 67 fences will be constructed.

It is worth noting that prior to 1996, none of the state's public schools had security fencing.

The Department of Education and monitors school security and provides advice on strategies to reduce security risks.

The Department will continue to monitor the security trends at Gymea Bay Public School and recommend strategies to reduce any potential risk as required.

An officer from the Department of Education and Training will visit Gymea Bay Public School during September 2006 to discuss the need for an electrical upgrade.

LILLI PILLI PUBLIC SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH10): Ms Cusack to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

With regard to the Lilli Pilli Public School, why, when it is about to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2007, do they still have no idea when a school assembly hall will be forthcoming? Do you have any plans in that regard?

Answer: In 2006/2007, the NSW Labor Government is investing a record \$486 million to upgrade facilities at public schools. This is the biggest school rebuilding program in the history of NSW and highlights a 145 per cent increase since the opposition was last in government.

Since 1995, the NSW Labor Government has completed over 360 major school upgrades worth more than \$1 million each. This Government has built 33 gyms and 125 halls, with work underway on a further 10 gyms and 14 halls.

Lilli Pilli Public School's current enrolment is 412 with a predicted decrease in enrolments to 363 students by 2010.

HEATHCOTE PUBLIC SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH11): Ms Cusack to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

With regard to the Heathcote Public School, why is it that the State Labor Government has failed to upgrade the toilets and plumbing in the school; nor has it installed a covered outdoor learning area, or the requested airconditioning to classrooms, or an upgrade of the electricity supply to support airconditioning and technology?

Answer: In 2006/2007, the NSW Labor Government is investing a record \$486 million to upgrade facilities at public schools. This is the biggest school rebuilding program in the history of NSW and highlights a 145 per cent increase since the opposition was last in government.

A project to upgrade toilet facilities and provide a covered outdoor learning area at Heathcote Public will continue to be considered for funding against competing priorities across the state.

The NSW Labor Government's decision to extend the air cooling program to schools with a mean maximum January temperature of 30° Celcius and above, meant an additional 425 schools qualified for air conditioning. Under the previous Liberal/National Government the mean maximum January temperature had to be above 33° Celsius.

Heathcote Public School is in an area that has a mean maximum January temperature of 25.5° Celsius and, as such, does not meet the Department's criteria for inclusion in the current Air Cooling Program.

**HEATHCOTE PUBLIC SCHOOL
(continued)**

An officer from the Department of Education and Training will visit the school to discuss the need for an electrical upgrade with the school principal.

WHEELER HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Catherine Cusack, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH12): Ms Cusack to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

As Wheeler Heights Public School has satisfied all the criteria for provision of a hall, can you explain when the school might expect to have the hall constructed/ why is it that you have not been able to do so to date?

Answer: In 2006/2007, the NSW Labor Government is investing a record \$486 million to upgrade facilities at public schools. This is the biggest school rebuilding program in the history of NSW and highlights a 145 per cent increase since the opposition was last in government.

Since 1995, the NSW Labor Government has completed over 360 major school upgrades worth more than \$1 million each. This Government has built 33 gyms and 125 halls, with work underway on a further 10 gyms and 14 halls.

A project to provide a hall at Wheeler Heights Public School has been identified by the Department and continues to be considered for inclusion in a future capital works program in the context of competing Regional and State-wide priorities.

SPECIAL STUDENT TRANSPORT

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH13):

Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

I have a question on behalf of parents of children with disabilities. What number of companies or individuals has contracts to deliver transport for students with disabilities from home to school and back in the calendar year 2005? What number of companies and individuals has contracts to deliver transport to such students in 2006?

Answer:

2005 - 602

2006 - 616

SPECIAL STUDENT TRANSPORT

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH14): Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

How many companies or individuals entered contracts for the delivery of disability transport services had their contracts discontinued during that period?

Answer: Two

SPECIAL STUDENT TRANSPORT

On Monday 4 September, 2006 The Hon. Robyn Parker, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH15):

Ms Parker to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Minister, how can you justify the position that a number of those companies that were given contracts this year no longer provide additional staff on the buses or on their transport services for students with disabilities?

Answer:

The majority of students who access special transport services do not need to be supported by an escort ("additional staff") while travelling to and from school.

Escorts are assigned to students who have been identified by their schools as requiring additional support during transit. The only circumstance where an escort may be removed from a transport run is when the school determines that the student no longer requires that support.

SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

On Monday 4 September, 2006 the Hon Ms Lee Rhiannon, MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH16):

Ms Rhiannon to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

Moving on to the issue of school counsellors, I am aware that there is a shortage of counsellors in public schools. Can you outline what this Government is doing to increase the number of counsellors in our public schools?

Answer:

School counsellors are only one part of an extensive support network which also includes student welfare consultants; teachers specially trained in behaviour management; year advisers; home school liaison officers; teacher's aides; out-of-home care teachers, executive staff and a range of regional positions.

There are over 790 school counsellors. During 2006, 93 school counsellors are in training. In 1995 there were only 660 school counsellors.

Every student in a government school has access to a school counsellor and the current provision of support staff is greater than at any other time.

In addition, through School-Link, the Education Department is working with NSW Health to improve mental health services to young people.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

On Monday 4 September, 2006 Reverend the Hon. F.J. Nile (Chair), MLC placed the following question on the Legislative Council Question and Answer Paper.

Question No. (TAH17):

The Reverend Nile to ask the Minister for Education and Training –

My next question relates to religious instruction. Some parents are a bit confused about the form that is being used. I am not sure whether it is a new form—the impression I get is that it is—asking people to answer a question on the issue of religious instruction. The question is, "What is the child's religion?" I understand that it was formerly worded more generally, so that the question was more along the lines of, "What is your Christian denomination?" So the parent would put Catholic, Baptist or Presbyterian. But, when they see the question, "What is your religion?" they are not sure whether to put Christian, Anglican or Catholic. I wonder whether it is the Board of Studies or what body that produces these questionnaires to be filled in parents. Does it come from any particular department? I am making the point whether the change in the question was deliberate in order to change the emphasis. I understand it is causing confusion in schools. If the schools put that question, they do not know what religious instruction class they go to, whether they are Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian or any of the other denominations. It needs to be Christian denomination, and then provision to have, for example, Catholic, and then they would put the name, and then below that "or other religion" and they can put Islam, Hindu or Buddhist.

Answer:

A new Student Enrolment Form has been introduced into NSW Government schools. It will clarify for schools the religion of students as nominated by parents. This information will assist the school to allocate students to special religious education classes.

Schools can further clarify the special religious education preferences of parents by using a

"Sample letter" to parents that has been provided to all schools. This letter lists the actual special religious education classes operating in the school.