Queensland the Smart State
Education and Training
Reforms for the Future

Queensland Government
Queensland’s most precious resource is its children. When we nurture our children, we nurture our future.

This is a Government with a vision for our State’s future. We are transforming Queensland into the Smart State of Australia – a State of prosperity and social justice with a commitment to equality of opportunity. At the very heart of this vision is education — the very best education possible for every Queensland child, so that he or she reaches their full potential and helps to build the Smart State.

As a parent of school-age children I, like all other Queensland parents, want my kids to have the best education possible so they are ready for a lifetime of learning and earning. As Premier, I want this for all Queensland children and young people. I know the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, and the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth, Matt Foley, share this goal.

“...This is a Government with a vision for our State’s future...”

The present State education and training system serves most students well. But we want much more than that — and our children deserve more. We want to build an exceptional State education and training system. We want a system that not only builds the mind, but also the character, of every student. We want stronger partnerships with parents, so they know our schools are helping them make important decisions about their children’s schooling and providing an education of excellence. This partnership needs to extend to teachers, trainers and educators. We want our system to keep pace with — and capitalise on — the rapid rate of change in our society.

That’s why this Government has set new goals for education, training and employment through:

• Queensland State Education – 2010 (QSE – 2010)
• Skilling Queensland 2001 — 2004, Queensland’s vocational education and training strategy
• jobs for young people through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative.
Statewide consultation in the development of these strategies involved more than 10,000 people and was the most extensive consultation process ever done by the education and training portfolios. We spoke to students, parents and guardians, teachers, educators, training providers, business leaders, employers, trade unions and other members of the Queensland community about the challenges in education and training.

Out of this consultation came a number of clear messages for the Government:

- a stronger focus on the early years of education
- more Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for teachers and students
- more students completing Year 12 in high schools or obtaining qualification in training or further education
- support for young people who need it most.

We heard the messages and now we are delivering.

We looked at the early years of education. Studies show that children do better when they have a preparatory year to get them ready for Year 1 and when they are older at the start of school. But in Queensland, not all children have the opportunity to attend a form of early education, like pre-school or kindergarten, and we have the youngest school starting age in Australia.

We need to be absolutely certain about what would best suit Queensland, before we could even consider the enormous investment that would be required to provide a preparatory school year.

So, from 2003, we will run trials to see what works for us — in terms of educational outcomes for students, meeting the needs of parents and cost effectiveness. These trials will also help us evaluate the best age for Queensland children to start school.

"...Our students must have highly trained teachers who know how to use technologies in the classroom..."

We looked again at ICTs in State schools, knowing that ICTs are absolutely fundamental in this new knowledge age and for the Smart State.

Our students must have highly trained teachers who know how to use technologies in the classroom. We will give teachers extra professional training and improve technical support. As well, we will supply extra computers, replace outdated computers more quickly, and connect more students to the internet.

Now, we are looking at senior schooling and how it can fit better with further education, training and work. We believe young people should be learning full-time until they turn 16 or 17 — or they should be earning full-time.
Currently, students must stay at school until they are 15. We believe that Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 should be engaged in school, vocational education and training or full-time work. That way, they are better educated, more mature and more ready to go on to further training or into work. The long-term social benefits for Queensland would be young people with more self-confidence, improved job opportunities and more people involved in life long learning.

Along with all young Queenslanders, we want to provide opportunity for those who have slipped through our safety nets. Our systems need to provide these young people with the foundations for social equity, informed citizenship and quality of life.

"...Along with all young Queenslanders, we want to provide opportunity for those who have slipped through our safety nets..."

We also want students in Year 10 to plan for their final years of learning by doing a "stocktake" of their achievements. We want them to be able to choose more flexible options which better suit their needs. We want to work with students at risk of leaving school early to find ways to help them stay in school or move into further education, training or full-time employment.

The Government wants to know what Queenslanders think about these and other proposals. Our ideas are set out in this discussion paper. My Ministers and I invite everyone — students, parents, carers, teachers, trainers, employers, representatives of the non-Government school sector and others in the community — to join the discussion.

All the initiatives in this document are driven by our determination to do even more for students, parents and teachers.

Students will benefit from the information that comes out of our trials of a preparation year for children. Teachers who are better-trained in ICTs will offer students more varied and relevant learning. Students with access to better computer equipment and greater technical support, will be more prepared for life after school.

If the Government's proposals for our education and training system are accepted, the big winners will be young people who will get a more relevant, more flexible and more rewarding education for longer.

Parents face complex decisions about education — whether their children are ready to start primary school, what they should study in the senior years, when they are ready to leave high school and what other education and training options they might be able to pursue. The proposed trials will tell us how to help parents get their children ready for school. Our proposals for senior schooling will assist parents who want their children to stay at school longer and want help to stop their children from dropping out. The proposals will support parents in choosing what's best for their children in the senior years of high school, in vocational education and training or in employment.

A Smart State Initiative

Queensland Government
"...Our Smart State Strategy is about creating 21st century jobs and a diversified economy with a major investment in traditional and new industries..."

Teachers will benefit from extra training in ICTs and better technical support.

We also want teachers to use their invaluable knowledge and experience to contribute to the discussion about senior schooling.

All of this is part of the Government's drive to build the Smart State. This is an investment in Queensland's future which will ensure we take our rightful place in this new and dynamic century and the highly competitive global economy. It will ensure jobs and prosperity for our children.

Our Smart State Strategy is about creating 21st century jobs and a diversified economy with a major investment in traditional and new industries. It is also about skilling and educating our people, so Queenslanders can take up these jobs now and in the future.

That's why we want our students to have more throughout their schooling to equip them to compete in the 21st century job market, go on to further training, study and employment, achieve job satisfaction and contribute to the Smart State.

As parents know, preparing a young person for life is a rewarding job that also has its challenges. The Government has a responsibility — together with every parent, teacher, business and community leader — to give our young people the knowledge, skills and inspiration to go into the world with confidence.

Peter Beattie MP
Premier and
Minister for Trade

Queensland Government

A Smart State Initiative
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High quality early education gives people more opportunities in their lives and therefore they have a greater capacity to contribute to our State's social and economic success.

The early years of schooling have a special place in the educational experience of our young people. These years are crucial in a child's development and are viewed as the first step in lifelong learning.

As parents know, if children are not "school-ready" when they start Year 1, they can be behind from the start of their formal schooling.

Parents and educators consistently identify three important areas in early childhood that need attention. They tell us that we must better meet the needs of children starting school, that we should consider the right age for children to start formal schooling in Queensland and that early education should fit the realities of daily work and life for parents.

WHAT RESEARCH, EDUCATORS AND THE COMMUNITY TELL US

Research shows that early childhood education better prepares children for formal schooling and more early education leads to better educational outcomes. The body of evidence internationally tells us that early education programs enhance thinking skills, school performance and social adjustment.

A child's emotional maturity, language development, physical and social skills are consolidated during these years.

There is also extensive evidence that early education leads to long-term improvements in school achievement and higher learning capacity. It also reduces disruptive behaviour and delinquency.

Not surprisingly then, a strong message that came out of our consultations on Queensland State Education – 2010 (QSE – 2010) was teacher and parent concern that many children need extra preparation before formal schooling. Many parents want to improve the transition to school, so that children start Year 1 with the social skills and maturity necessary for the formal setting of a Year 1 classroom.

The reading and writing skills of children in schools around Australia are regularly measured in the National Benchmark for Literacy. Recent reports against this benchmark have shown that Queensland has a higher proportion of students in Years 3 and 5 who do not achieve the national benchmark than some other states. While these tests are only one part of our children's achievement profile, to achieve excellence in education we need everyone to do better in Years 3 and 5.

In consultations, many parents have also told us that they want early education programs that are full-time and run five days a week. Full-time programs reflect the changes that have occurred in daily life, where often all parents and caregivers are working at least some of the time. This reality is not always reflected in our pre-school programs.

WHAT HAPPENS IN QUEENSLAND

In Queensland, students are at least five months younger than students in other states when they start Year 1.

In Queensland, many children currently attend a year in a part-time pre-school program for five half-days a week or five days over two weeks. Some children also attend programs at State-subsidised Creches and Kindergartens, some at non-State schools and some in child care centres. In many of these settings, qualified early childhood teachers use Queensland's Preschool Curriculum Guidelines to plan what they teach our children.

Not all students attend programs before they enter Year 1 and many of the programs offered are not flexible enough to meet the needs of working parents. In fact, about one in four State primary schools does not have any pre-school program. Those that do offer these programs often have long waiting lists.

In response to the needs of parents and children, a number of State schools are also already running innovative programs that help prepare students for Year 1. (See case study over page).

WHAT HAPPENS IN OTHER STATES AND COUNTRIES

We also looked at how other Governments respond to this issue in Australia and overseas.

Our research shows that in other States and Territories of Australia the State education systems offer at least one year of full-time education before children start Year 1. Although attendance is not compulsory, almost 100 per cent of children attend. These programs are known by a variety of names including kindergarten, preparatory and transition. (See table 1).

As we have already noted, children in other Australian states are older when they start school than their Queensland counterparts (See table 2).

Many countries also have higher starting ages for formal schooling than Queensland. Most European countries - including Sweden, Germany, France, and Norway - start formal schooling at six or seven years of age. Likewise, the majority of States within the USA start formal schooling at six or seven years of age. On the other hand, children in England are in full-time school education by five, and it has become practice for children to start school as young as four.

Many countries offer two or three years of early education before children start Year 1. A number of European countries, including Germany and France, subsidise two to three years of quality early education before schooling and there are varying degrees of subsidisation of early education across the United States of America.

Table 1: Current provision of pre Year 1 in Other States and Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Name of education program</th>
<th>Length of session</th>
<th>Type of attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Pre-Primary</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Full school day, 5 days per week</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Pre-school ‘Half-time’, 5 days per fortnight</td>
<td>Non-compulsory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Age of Entry for Year 1 in Other States and Territories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Month and age of entry for Year 1</th>
<th>How much older than Qld</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>January, 5 turning 6 by 30 April</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>January, 5 turning 6 by 31 July</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>January, 5 turning 6 by 30 April</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>January, turning 6 by 1 January</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>January, 5 turning 6 by 30 June</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>January, 5 years 6 months by 1 January</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>January, 5 years 6 months by 1 January</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>January, 5 turning 6 by 31 December</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We also know that extra services would be expensive and, of course, we want to offer the best programs in the most cost-effective ways. In this context, we would have to take into account our current investment in State school pre-school programs.

As we have indicated, Queensland children start formal schooling at least five months earlier than their interstate counterparts. We think we need to reconsider whether this is the best starting age for our children or if we should, sometime in the future, move the starting age forward by six months. This would mean that where children currently start Year 1 in the year in which they turn six by 31 December, they would in future start Year 1 in the year in which they turn six by 30 June.

This is why, in 2003, we will start trials to evaluate different ways of providing quality early education programs that suit the needs of Queensland’s children and parents. In the long term, trials will also help us to make a decision whether to convert current State school part-time pre-school into a full-time preparatory year.

Our trials will help us consider these issues:

- How important is extra preparation in improving “school-readiness” and educational outcomes?
- Do all, or only some, children need extra preparation?
- Should extra preparation mean a full year?
- Where should this happen?
- Who should provide it?
- Should we adjust the age at which our children start school?

Fifty Preparing for School trials will commence in various regions of the State, over 2003 and 2004. Participation in the trials is optional for parents.

We are seeking expressions of interest from State schools that want to undertake full-time Preparing for School trials for children of pre-school or Year 1 age (more detail can be found in the back of the discussion paper). We are keen to encourage innovation in the trials, and to ensure that they provide improved outcomes for students and can be evaluated. Each trial will be delivered by a suitably qualified teacher, using curriculum guidelines specifically developed for Queensland children.

All trials will be carefully evaluated and the Government will receive detailed reports on their progress. A number of non-State schools are currently providing a full school week of early education. The Government seeks the participation of some of these non-State schools, across areas with differing community profiles, in the evaluation process.

To make sure that Queensland children get prepared for school in the best possible way, we will:

- immediately establish an Early Childhood Education Unit, within Education Queensland, to provide leadership in early childhood education and oversee the Preparing for School trials, to guide Education Queensland’s work in this area and find the best ways of addressing the needs of Queensland’s children and their parents;
- develop a Queensland Early Years Curriculum for use in trial schools, seeking advice from early education experts from Queensland and other States and examining the best curriculum available throughout the world; and
- establish a Reference Group - including the Queensland Teachers’ Union, Primary Principals’ Association, non-State school sector, the community-based sector, the childcare sector, parents and others - to provide advice on early education issues to the Minister for Education.

an example of excellence

Southport State School

At Southport State School, on the Gold Coast, all pre-school students and a number of Year 1 students work daily in small groups in literacy programs. Before the start of this program four years ago, teachers were concerned that some students displayed little knowledge of letters, sounds, traditional tales and basic conversational skills. Some also had poor fine motor development and needed to learn how to take turns, particularly in games. The school asked a speech pathologist and a communications teacher to devise an early literacy program, which has been continually refined. The students are immersed in language and are given an enriched literacy program using rhyme, song and word games.
ICTs for school and work

"Information technology is the basis of the knowledge economy. Students will need skills in information technology to transact business and to work in the future...In schools learning will be transformed...Teachers need mastery of and access to information technology to manage the learning of their students. Virtual classrooms and the ready access to student support within the state system increase access to wider learning options for students."

Queensland State Education—2010

We all know that students need to use the tools of their time in their daily learning. Just as slate and chalk were indispensable to learning 40 years ago, computers and computer skills are essential for success today.

Young people must leave school with the ability to think creatively and critically, solve problems, be flexible, work in teams, and be skilled in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Today, information or knowledge workers comprise an increasing proportion of the workforce. They are not confined to the new, high technology industries but are also required in traditional industries such as mining, farming, manufacturing and construction. ICTs are a part of everyday modern life — from banking and air travel to biotechnology. Computer-based toys and entertainment are part of our children’s leisure activities.

ICTs have a role to play in education as a tool for thinking, learning and communicating.

We have a responsibility to equip students with these skills so they can compete for highly skilled jobs, add value to the State and national economies, and compete in the international labour market. This also means we have to equip teachers with the skills to teach what students need.

WHAT RESEARCH, EDUCATORS AND THE COMMUNITY TELL US

Research shows ICTs innovation has a positive effect on student achievement in all major subject areas — from pre-school through to higher education — for mainstream and special needs students, urban and remote students. We know that computer use has positive effects on student attitudes toward learning, motivation to learn and increases self-confidence and self-esteem.

Research also tells us that through ICTs we can introduce new teaching and learning methods, increase curriculum choices and improve school attendance.

Networking of computers is extending the range of human interactions and problem solving strategies. The challenge is to connect the computers within schools and beyond the school gate to community, state, national and global resources and services. We want our schools to be connected to these new opportunities and to play a key role in linking homes, communities, industry, vocational education and training, and tertiary sectors.

While Queenslanders are enthusiastic about Smart State technology, a survey of computer and internet use in Queensland homes in 2001 showed that around 40 per cent of households do not have access to a computer at home and more than 50 per cent do not have internet access.

In 2001, eight schools in Brisbane, Mt Isa and Rockhampton participated in the Community Internet Access in Schools Project. An evaluation of these trials showed many benefits, from an improvement in general computer skills and increased confidence in using the internet through to parents being more able to understand what their children were doing at school.

Across the State, more schools are opening their doors and making their computer facilities available to students and the wider community outside of school hours.

With these facts in mind, we are keen to provide sufficient computers for students and teachers, and to develop schools as community centres as outlined in QSE—2010.

WHAT HAPPENS IN QUEENSLAND

In Queensland, we have focused on ICTs in State schools for some time
an example of excellence

Nyanda State High School teacher Colleen Stieler

Colleen Stieler last year became the International Society for Technology in Education’s Outstanding Educator of the Year – the first non-American recipient of the award. Colleen teaches Computing Studies subjects and organises a wide range of extra-curricular ICTs activities at Nyanda State High School in Salisbury, Brisbane.

She was the inspiration behind last year’s “Operation Bessie”, which produced picture books for children in developing countries. Nyanda’s Girls in Technology group - Techno G. - worked with visiting Year 5 and 6 students from local primary schools to make the colourful books. The books and products donated by sponsors, will be sent to schools and refugee camps overseas in the next month.

You can view the books online at http://www.nyandashs.qld.edu.au/ in the projects section. Colleen shares her high-quality classroom resources with other teachers at her Aussie SchoolHouse site: http://www.teachers.ash.org.au/colleens/. She is representative of a valuable pool of Queensland teachers with many years experience in the use of computers for learning and teaching, world class expertise and unlimited enthusiasm.

now. Since 1998, we have invested more than $197 million in this area.

In 2000, we set a target for State schools to achieve a ratio of one computer per five students and we committed ourselves to achieving this ratio in Years 8 to 12 by 2002, and in Years 3 to 7 by 2004. We have made significant progress towards this target. The Years 8 to 12 target has been met on a statewide basis — with some schools exceeding the target and others still working their way towards it. We are also on track to achieving our target for Years 3 to 7.

In addition, all State schools have some form of internet connection. Connecting all of our schools presents special challenges in Queensland. Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia, with most people living outside the capital. We have almost 1300 schools from the Gold Coast, stretching inland to Mount Isa and up through to the Torres Strait. Seventy-four per cent of computers in high school classrooms and 60 per cent of computers in primary school classrooms are connected.

Today, students have better access to information, learning content and innovative teaching methods than ever before. Students participate in national and global projects, use the internet for research and the Virtual Schooling Service has opened up new options for hundreds of senior students especially in rural and remote areas.

In future, students will read and write multimedia as well as traditional print, use spreadsheets to create and analyse graphs in mathematics, use databases to record and report on large amounts of information and use simulations of complex systems and processes. They will use ICTs for research and presentation and for creative expression in Music and Art.

Teachers have at their disposal a sophisticated set of tools with which they can communicate, distribute, review and record information and student achievement. However, computers alone are not the answer — dedicated and skilled teachers are the most valuable resource in our classrooms. If we want ICTs to make a genuine impact on outcomes, we must support all our teachers by strengthening professional learning.

Of course, we already have many teachers who use computers in ways that enliven their teaching and inspire their students. They understand the critical role that ICTs play in their profession. These teachers are taking up the challenge of how ICTs can be used to motivate students and to promote higher order thinking skills, deeper understanding and rich learning environments.

In future, all teachers will need to apply ICTs to their work — from curriculum plans to assessment, for literacy and numeracy and in all subjects.

We need to provide our teachers with even more skills, more practical examples of how to integrate ICTs into the curriculum and access to reliable networked computers.

WHAT HAPPENS IN OTHER STATES AND COUNTRIES

As table 3 shows, Queensland performs well in comparison to other Australian States and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, when measuring computer to student ratios.

While our target of one computer to five students falls short of Singapore’s target of one computer per two students, it exceeds the United Kingdom’s aim of one to 11 in primary schools and one to seven in high schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>QLD</th>
<th>VIC</th>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001 ratio</td>
<td>1:6</td>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>1:9</td>
<td>1:3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In January 2002, the UK Government announced a massive ICTs expansion program for schools, investing around £150 million.

In addition to providing computers, many countries have invested in school computer networks to connect teachers and students to the internet. The United States has achieved a ratio of one internet-connected computer to eight students in primary school and one to five students in secondary schools. The United Kingdom has one per 23.5 students in primary schools and one per nine students in secondary. In Denmark, the ratio is one to six for primary students and one to two for secondary students.

When schools allow access to computers outside of school hours, people in the general community get otherwise unavailable access to the internet. In the United States, 54 per cent of schools make the internet available outside school hours. Of these, 98 per cent made it available after school, 84 per cent before school and 16 per cent on weekends.

ICTs in schools have the power to make a huge difference to the way we learn. That is why we’ve made ICTs a top priority in this new millennium. We will build on our investment so far with extra funding for teachers’ professional development and school ICTs.

For students:
- there will be more individual learning with instruction at a pace, place and time suited to their needs and more opportunities for creative and critical thinking; and
- there will be access to a wider range of instructional and assessment methods and more collaborative and project based learning.

For teachers:
- we will deliver more training with an ICTs Learning Guarantee to teachers, over the next three years.

an example of excellence

Cyberschools Cluster

Three State primary schools on the Sunshine Coast have used exciting new ways to teach and learn. Teachers and thirty-two Year 7 students from Mooloolah, Palmwoods, and Mapleton schools were part of the north coast Cyberschools Cluster. The teachers used on-line activities and work in the classroom, excursions and research, to examine the water quality of the local catchment and suggest ways to improve it. Students used on-line chatrooms to share their ideas and some involved their parents on-line at home. The use of computers meant teachers, students and parents involved with different schools could work together to find creative solutions to a local issue.

Every State school teacher will be entitled to professional development in integrating ICTs into teaching and learning;
- schools will be responsible for negotiating professional development programs with their staff. These could include: attending formal training delivered by external providers or at other schools; in-class demonstrations and support by expert peers; use of online examples and mentors; or clusters of schools sharing resources and expertise; and
- we will recognise and reward teachers for excellence and effort through a new Learning Technology Award.

For students and teachers:
- we will invest in 3,000 more computers, particularly to assist primary school classes to achieve our target ratio of one computer to five students;
- we will double the funding for replacement of computers;
- we will get more computers connected to local and global networks to improve communication and information access;
- technical support will be improved to reduce the time teachers spend on technical tasks;
- we will accelerate a common standard of ICTs infrastructure and technical support across schools, and provide ongoing funding for recurrent and replacement costs;
- between 2002 and 2005, all schools will update and replace outdated machines as resourcing for replacement of computers is doubled, providing 19,400 computers to replace the oldest of the existing 77,000 computers;
- we will connect another 9,600 computers to the internet by extending Local Area Networks in schools where students and teachers have limited access to networked computers. This will result in another 1,600 classrooms being cabled and up to 50,000 primary and secondary students with better access to online learning resources;
- continuity of funding will support long-term planning and management of ICTs resources in all schools; and
- we will investigate more cost-effective ways to purchase computers and IT services, including managed service contracts and Public Private Partnerships, to get the most out of our resources.

For parents:
- enhanced computer systems will allow us to provide communities with out of school hours computer access for parents and community groups.
"...all effective transition systems appear to have one thing in common: underlying them are societies that assume responsibility for young people’s transition from education to work." OECD 2000

"Individuals who complete school are more likely to find employment than those who do not. Individuals seeking to gain post-school qualifications will increasingly require Year 12 to gain entry".

Queensland State Education—2010

All of us – whether parents, educators, business people, or members of the general community - want young people to move successfully from school into further study or work. We all want our young people to have the education and the skills that will give them more opportunities in life.

Today, young people are often more independent and autonomous than their parents or grandparents. They also expect more from their education and training and are clear about what they like and what meets their needs. They face a world more complex and competitive than their parents or grandparents could have imagined.

We know that our labour market has changed dramatically over the past 40 years. Now, more than ever, employers require people with good communication and thinking skills, initiative and motivation, and a high level of numeracy and literacy proficiency. We need people with personal maturity and readiness to keep learning. Employers tell us that many early school leavers lack the skills they require.

Our current education system works very well for the majority of our students. Around 70 per cent of our students complete high school. The majority of these students go on to further education or employment. A number of young people leave high school after they turn 15 to go into apprenticeships, traineeships or vocational training.

However, some young people leave school early and do not find a way into work, training or further study.

Our young people matter. We must do what we can to keep all of them in some form of learning or earning. We must take responsibility for what happens to young people now, so that they can lead satisfying lives and fully contribute to our society and economy.

WHAT RESEARCH, EDUCATORS AND THE COMMUNITY TELL US

International and national evidence tells us that young people who complete 12 years of schooling have more opportunities in further education and employment. Students who complete senior schooling and/or have a vocational education and training qualification benefit from being more mature and more prepared for work.

Compared with young people who complete Year 12, those who don’t finish Year 12 are more likely to experience extended periods of unemployment, obtain low-paid and low-skilled jobs and have difficulty obtaining relatively stable jobs. They will be more likely to earn less, rely on government assistance and not engage in full-time study.

Evidence indicates that unemployment in the year after school can have a long-lasting detrimental effect on young people. Up to a third of young people who experience difficulties in this first year after school, can continue to have difficulties over the next six years.

There is an international trend across OECD countries to retain students in school or vocational education and training for longer because of the benefits in literacy, maturity and preparation for work and further study.

Vocational education and training programs in schools have led to more students staying in school, obtaining full-time work and/or formal education or training after they finish Year 12.

The importance of senior secondary schooling and vocational education and training is also highlighted when we consider recent changes in the labour market.

For example, in Australia in 1980, around 50 per cent of males aged 15 to 19 years had full-time employment. By 2000, this had reduced to less than 25 per cent. In 1989, 445,000 people aged 15 to 19 were in full-time work. In 1999, there were 226,500. Almost half of all youth employees are employed on a casual basis. They are largely concentrated in a number of industries, particularly the retail and hospitality sectors.

The labour market in Australia today is characterised by people being older when they enter full-time employment and by people combining part-time and casual work while they are still at school, in vocational education and training and further study.
In Queensland, changes in the population and economy over the last 10 years mean that the composition of the workforce — and the skills that the workforce needs — have also undergone great change.

Early school leavers who are not involved in further training are ill-equipped to compete in the labour market, are more likely to be unemployed and have diminished life chances and opportunities.

We know many early school leavers are alienated and disaffected with school. They believe the studies offered by schools are irrelevant to what they might want to do in future and they have difficulty accepting school environments. Some do not cope with the requirements and structure of senior schooling and systems of assessment. However we might look at it, these perceptions of school are very real to some of our young people.

Our research shows that to make a difference we have to be committed to each individual and need to support each young person until they achieve positive outcomes. Successful strategies need to include well organised connections between education and work or further study; tight-knit assistance for those at risk of leaving school early; good information and guidance; and a key person who guides each student.

**WHAT HAPPENS IN QUEENSLAND**

In Queensland, secondary education is provided in 274 State high schools and in 187 non-State high schools. The Queensland Government guarantees each student 24 full-time semesters of education as an entitlement and requires students to attend school until they are 15 years of age, which is the minimum school leaving age. This age is set down in law and parents potentially face fines if their children, who have not yet reached the school leaving age, do not attend school.

Students receive a comprehensive general education that becomes increasingly specialised as they move through the more senior years of schooling. They develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills and processes that promote learning and development and prepare them for
life beyond school. We know that the majority of students move successfully from school and into further education, training or employment, and for them, no major change to the system is required.

Our focus in recent years has been on improving outcomes for all young people:

- We have steadily increased the Year 12 retention rate in State schools from 68 per cent in 1998 to 73 per cent in 2001 and we are on track to meet our target of 88 per cent retention, as identified in our QSE-2010 strategy;
- In 2000, 28,569 secondary school students took part in work placements or work experience;
- Through the Skilling Queensland 2001-2004 Strategy, we have encouraged young people to combine their general education with vocational training, including school-based apprenticeships and traineeships;
- As a result, schools work in partnership with training providers such as TAFE institutes to provide practical and relevant access programs while they are at school;
- In 2000, 3687 school students participated in school-based traineeships and apprenticeships - more than 50 per cent of all school-based traineeships and apprenticeships in Australia. Queensland is recognised as leading the nation in the delivery of structured training in schools;
- We have increased the number of apprentices and trainees to more than 50,000 at any one time;
- Our further education providers - such as TAFE and private providers - offer many opportunities that lead to apprenticeships, jobs or university entrance;
- Around 30 per cent of students eligible for an OP score go on to further study at university;
- We provide labour market programs through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative, such as the Get Set for Work Program, to provide intensive training and employment assistance for unemployed early school leavers;
- We foster creative arts for young people such as the Youth Arts Mentoring Program.

We know we can do more to provide even better flexibility and coordination between schools, TAFE, private training providers, universities and employers. We also know that individualised assistance is a crucial factor to success for these young people.

WHAT HAPPENS IN OTHER STATES AND COUNTRIES

Across Australia, 67 per cent of young people complete secondary schooling. Queensland is ranked third, with a 73 per cent completion rate, behind the ACT and Tasmania. The most successful European countries have much better secondary school retention rates than Queensland. In Germany, for example, just eight per cent of young people do not complete secondary school and in Denmark the figure is 10 per cent. As well, most OECD countries also provide two to four years more schooling than Queensland, including Denmark, Belgium and Germany. (See Table 4)

We have also looked at the services provided by other states and countries to young people who are at risk of leaving school early.

Early indications from the Victorian Pathways Project are that it works well. This project provides negotiators who work with young people, at risk of leaving school early, to manage the next steps of their education, training or employment.
The United Kingdom Government has tackled this issue in a recently-released discussion paper. It canvases the idea of a new certificate that is awarded at age 19 and which would recognise achievements both in formal qualifications and activities such as voluntary work, arts, sport and music.

Denmark's youth guidance service is legally required to follow up every young person who leaves school without a qualification. The service works with individuals on an action plan which has the primary aim of getting students back into mainstream schooling, via other education, training and work.

In Norway, there is a "youth guarantee" that gives early school leavers a right of access to follow-up services designed to get them back into education. The program has reduced the number of young people who leave school early and has guided early leavers into positive activities.

We want to drive our achievements even further. And we want to do this in partnership with young people, parents, teachers, further education and training providers, the business community and the broader community. That's why we want to talk about proposed new reforms in three key areas.

Our proposals are to:

* introduce new legislation that would require young people, aged 15 to 17, to be engaged in full-time schooling, vocational education and training, higher education or work;
* reorganise the senior years of schooling into a cluster of Years 10, 11 and 12 to enable our young people to plan for the future, consolidate their knowledge and skills, or accelerate their learning, and;

ensure all learning - including school, further education, training or work - can be counted towards achieving a Senior Certificate.

To achieve this we suggest three strategies:

* school as the local coordinator for learning and youth support;
* youth workers work with young people at risk of leaving school early, and develop individualised learning, training and employment plans; and
* schools build their capacity to implement the proposed changes through additional support structures.

Our long term objectives are to ensure that all young Queenslanders:

* stay at school to complete Year 12, which may include vocational education and training while at school; or
* start an apprenticeship or traineeship; or
* enrol in a vocational education and training program at Australian Qualification Framework level 3 or a program which could articulate to this level of qualification, or
* commence higher education; or
* obtain paid employment.
proposal one

All young people in school, vocational education and training or work

Currently, Queensland students are required to stay at school until they turn 15. But this has not always been the case.

In 1875, the school leaving age was set at 12 years. Then, people felt that after the age of 12, children had enough education to go into the workplace. In 1912, the leaving age was raised to 14 years and it remained so until 1964 when it became 15 years.

That was almost 40 years ago. Much has changed since and, in fact, most of our young people choose to stay in school for two years longer than the law requires.

Now, as four decades ago, we live in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world that demands more education and training throughout our lives. We want all our young people to be well prepared for life and that's why we are considering lifting the leaving age from 15 years to 16 or 17 years, and taking a broader view of how it applies. The leaving age would no longer be relevant only in the school context, but would reflect our intention to have all young people participate in learning or earning. This means that in Queensland, young people under the age of 16 or 17 would need to participate in either full-time schooling, further education or work. This would apply to all students – whether in State or non-Government schools.

We think most people will accept the reasons behind this proposal. If we raise the leaving age to 17, for example, we will be in line with the best in the world and will lead Australia.

To achieve this, we would amend the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 to raise the leaving age and broaden its application. Under the amendments, students would be required to remain enrolled with a school until they turn 16 or 17 and they would have to be engaged in full-time schooling, further education or training or work.

Questions

• Should young people be required to be engaged in full-time school, vocational education and training or work?
• Should this apply until young people reach the age of 16 or 17?
• Would anyone be disadvantaged by the new arrangements?

How would the law work?

As indicated above, most Queensland students attend school longer than they are legally required, beyond the age of 15, because they and their parents recognise the benefits that come from senior schooling. Many young Queenslanders also participate in vocational education and training or work from 15 onwards.

Currently, the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 holds parents responsible for enrolling their children in school and ensuring they attend until 15 years of age. The school has responsibilities to ‘check’ on this through policies on absenteeism. For example, if a student does not attend school for three days in a row, without explanation, the school is required to follow up. In some areas, the police and the school are working closely together to prevent truancy and to ensure young people do not break the law.

The law allows for exemptions for a range of health and other reasons. Section 115 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989 allows exemptions such as approved home schooling, infectious diseases, distance from a school and any other reason which the Minister for Education considers is valid.

The same laws would apply under the new system.

Questions

• What should be grounds for exemptions if we changed the leaving age to 16 or 17?
• Could raising the leaving age to 16 or 17 years negatively affect any other training or employment arrangements for young people?

How would we introduce the new leaving age?

If we want a new leaving age, we need to consider the best time to introduce it. We would need to think about what best suits parents, students, schools, vocational education and training providers and employers.

We could introduce the new leaving age at any time, however people need time to adjust to such changes. The following are two possible options for making the change.

Option 1 - We could introduce the new age from January 2007. This would mean that, if your child is enrolled in Year 7, in 2002, he or she would be in the first group of students to whom the new leaving age applied. In other words, your child would have to attend school until he or she turns 16 or 17 or until he or she completes Year 12. Alternatively, your child would need to be in full-time vocational education and training or work.

Option 2 – If we introduce it earlier than 2007, it would mean that the new arrangements would apply to current high school students, who would have to stay at school for one or two years longer, be engaged in full-time vocational education and training or work.
In other words, we want young people in some form of "learning or earning".

Questions
• If we adjust the leaving age to 16 or 17, should the new arrangements start in the Year 2007?
• What are the things the Government needs to consider in deciding on a starting date?

Proposal Two
Re-organising senior secondary schooling

Currently, Year 10 is the end of the compulsory years of schooling. Years 11 and 12 are the senior years of schooling. If we raise the school leaving age to 16 or 17 years, all education providers could make Year 10 the first year of senior schooling. So, instead of Year 10 being the end point of compulsory schooling, it could become the starting point of learning in senior school or elsewhere.

There may be many advantages in re-organising senior schooling in this way.

Students could start their senior schooling — in Year 10 — by planning for their final years of learning with a "stocktake" of their learning and their future options.

They could begin to plan by identifying broad areas of interest. Some young people will know exactly which career path they want to pursue in the long term, such as going into an apprenticeship to become a mechanic or going through university and becoming a lawyer. Other young people will still want to explore all their options without cutting off their subject choices in future years.

Year 10 could provide the structure and support to help students work their way through the rich choice of subjects that are offered and set them up for their remaining time of schooling or help them into further education, training or a job.

Year 10 could be the time for students to get ahead — by forging forward in an area of special interest — or catch up by plugging the gaps in their learning to date. For example, a student might discover he or she has not done enough Math to pursue a higher level in Years 11 and 12 for a chosen career that requires high-level numeracy skills. Year 10 would provide an opportunity for this.

Example of Excellence
Marsden State High School

Marsden State High School, on Brisbane's southside, has developed initiatives that have enhanced learning, training and employment options for its students and have increased the number of students completing Year 12.

The Enterprise and Career Education program in Year 10 integrates English, Math, Social Science and Science, and the curriculum is presented in the context of society. For example, in term four, students focus on the development of a community and develop housing plans, address environmental issues and deal with budget problems.

Work Education is offered to students in Years 11 and 12. These students attend a structured work placement one day a week and, to ensure they don’t miss their regular subjects, early morning Math and English classes are scheduled. In 2001, the Year 12 students were involved in the production, marketing and selling of glass pictures and ornaments.

In 2001, the school had 39 students from Years 11 and 12 undertaking school-based apprenticeships or traineeships in hospitality, the automotive industry, early childhood, retail, information technologies and office administration. These young people were able to study five subjects instead of six.
• proposal

an example of excellence

Goondiwindi State High School

Goondiwindi State High School, in a rural community about 375 kilometres southwest of Brisbane, increased its Year 12 completion rate from 54 per cent in 1999 to 89 per cent in 2000. This remarkable result was achieved through a partnership between the school, local rural industry and the wider community, called SILO - School Industry Links Outreach. Ninety-six employers provided training opportunities to Year 11 students and school-based traineeships are offered in 17 industry areas. Participating students are required to complete only four school subjects, as well as the requirements of their training plan. A full-time liaison officer coordinates the placements for students and assists with any issues that arise for students, teachers and employers.

To build upon this achievement, a partnership - between the Department of Employment and Training, Education Queensland, local rural industry and the community - has been formed to establish the Goondiwindi Rural Technology Skills Centre. The centre, to be built next to the school, is expected to be completed in 2002.

student to catch up. Another student might have such advanced skills that he or she could undertake an advanced Math subject while still in Year 10. This will be the time for students to identify if they have any significant gaps in their knowledge and address them.

This re-organisation would also allow us to make the best use of existing choices - including schooling, vocational education and training and business placement - for the benefit of all students. It would help schools to deliver excellence in learning.

Close coordination between school, vocational education and training providers and employers will assist in producing better outcomes for young people. Some Queensland schools, further education and training providers already offer innovative programs to link the worlds of school, further education, training and work. Many have developed excellent working relationships with their communities and particularly with industry and business. As a result of their efforts, more students can participate in relevant and flexible learning and training.

As these case studies show, coordination between schools, employers, training providers and tertiary organisations produces excellent results.

That's why we have commissioned a review to examine how schools, TAFE, private education and training providers and universities might improve levels of cooperation and integration. The Gardner review will be completed mid-year and will provide important information on this subject.

Questions

• Should we re-organise the senior years of schooling to include Years 10, 11 and 12 or maintain senior school as Years 11 and 12?
• Do you agree with our proposal to use year 10 as a "stocktake" of a student's learning?
• Do some students require this "stocktake" earlier?
• What can we do to improve coordination between all relevant sectors - school, vocational education, universities and employers?
• Who should be responsible for driving this improved coordination?

Clustering of Years 10, 11 and 12 could be introduced at any time and does not have to wait for the possible introduction of a new leaving age. Rather, it could assist retention rates in the meantime by drawing all young people into a form of senior schooling. We could decide to introduce the re-organisation in 2005, for example, which would mean that the students entering Year 8 next year (2003) would be the first group to benefit.

Questions

• Should the re-organisation be introduced in 2005 or earlier?

Middle Schooling

Upper primary and lower secondary schooling are an important time for our young people. We want to ensure that children in these years maintain

an example of excellence

SCISCO (South Coast Industry Coordinating Organisation)

SCISCO is an industry led non-profit organisation involving 21 State and non-Government schools, that coordinates workplace learning across nine industries for Gold Coast students. Since 1996, it has acted as the central body linking Gold Coast schools, industry and community organisations. SCISCO offers work placements, a school-based apprenticeship program and assistance into employment. A strong theme is the importance of vocational education and training. Schools have reported that involvement with SCISCO has led to students making better transitions to further education, training or work and improved career opportunities for students.
their enthusiasm for learning and get ready for senior schooling.

We have already invested in a significant program, the New Basics, to improve student outcomes in the middle years. The strength of New Basics for these years of schooling is that it aims to connect student learning to the world beyond the classroom, while increasing the level of intellectual challenge. Our aim is to make the middle years relevant and motivating to keep students interested in learning.

As we have seen, Year 10 could be a "stocktake" year going into the senior years of schooling. Year 8 currently provides a transition for students to the junior years of high school.

During the QSE-2010 consultations, many people told us that if we re-organise the senior years of schooling, we should also consider changes to the middle years. These people believe high school should start at Years 6 or 7 and be clustered with Years 8 and 9 to form the middle years of schooling.

The age of students in upper primary would, of course, increase if the school starting age increases, as discussed in relation to early education reforms.

The system of clustering Years 6, 7, 8 and 9 is already being implemented in some non-Government schools and in about 50 State schools that are organised along a preschool to Year 10-12 structure.

Questions

• If we re-organise Years 10, 11 and 12 as senior schooling, what are the implications for middle schooling?
• Are there other implications related to middle schooling that we need to consider?

Examples of excellence

Kelvin Grove State College

Kelvin Grove State College, in Brisbane, is a great example of a school that has thought about how to best meet the needs of students at different stages of their development. The College is organised into three "clusters" of school years. The Junior School (Years P-5) caters for children, the Middle School (Years 6-9) provides education to adolescents, and the Senior School provides learning for young adults (Years 10-12). What is taught and how it is taught is tailored to each sub-school. This approach has won the support of the local community.

Rosedale State School

Rosedale State School has developed an integrated curriculum that incorporates the four key learning areas of English, Math, Science, and Studies of Society and Environment.

Year 8 students engage in a compact curriculum program for the first six months. They are then given the opportunity to work in a multi-age setting with Year 9 and 10 students. Students can select subjects to complete their junior secondary requirements by the middle of Year 10. In Semester Two of Year 10 they can elect senior school options or revisit areas of the junior curriculum to improve their results.
proposals

proposal three

Recording achievement

Employers consistently tell us that the current Senior Certificate, provided at the completion of Year 12, does not give enough information about a student's broader skills, abilities or "work-readiness".

We believe that our OP (Overall Position) system, which allows young people entry into university, does not need to change at the moment. But we need to provide a more meaningful picture for employers.

We could do this through recording the achievements for every student from Years 10, 11 and 12. This could include school-based learning, learning at TAFE or another education or training provider, part-time or full-time work, apprenticeships and any other activity that provides skills. (See section overleaf "Schools as the Local Coordinator" for further details). It could also include information about a student's thinking and analytical skills, team ability and citizenship awareness.

This would mean that all students would have a record that documents all their achievements, regardless of where they are obtained. This could be provided in addition to or as part of the current Senior Certificate, or it could replace the Senior Certificate.

While we want to be generous in including worthwhile learning, we need to maintain and strengthen the credibility of the Senior Certificate. This could be achieved by asking the Queensland Studies Authority to develop a new assessment framework.

To explore this issue, we have commissioned a review of the Senior Certificate. The Pitman report will be provided in June 2002 and will offer important information on this issue.

Questions

- Do you think recording all of a student's achievements, even if obtained outside of the school setting, would be useful for:
  - young people
  - parents
  - employers
  - vocational education and training providers
  - higher education providers.

- What information would employers want to see recorded?

- How do you think non-school-based activities should be assessed and described?

- Would we require a new assessment framework?

- Should the recorded achievements be part of the Senior Certificate?

- Or should they be available at any point during Years 10, 11 and 12?
strategy

strategy one
School as the local coordinator for learning and youth support

We've already seen that every Queensland student is entitled to 24 semesters of education. Most students use up their entitlement to 24 semesters of education, obtain their senior qualifications and turn 17 at the same time. Some students, such as those undertaking some part-time education, might need extra time to use up their entitlement. Others, like accelerated learners, complete the Senior Certificate earlier. Some young people will take up full-time jobs before they are 16 or 17 and return to formal learning at a later date, as they do now.

We know that the transition from school to work or to further education and training is vital to a young person's success. However, schooling does not work smoothly for all students.

Even now, despite the current laws, some students do not attend school or an alternative education option until the minimum leaving age. We need to work harder and smarter to prevent this.

We think that a student's participation in some form of learning should be the joint responsibility of the individual student, parents, carers and the school involved. In future, we want the whole of the school system to work with a student and his or her parents and teachers. The system should assist that young person to remain enrolled with school or access training, further education or work and achieve senior qualifications.

If school is not rewarding for a student, especially someone at risk of leaving early, we need to review the current arrangements. We think such a student might require more flexibility and could be enrolled "with" a school but not necessarily be required to undertake his or her learning "at" a school.

In other words, a student would be enrolled with his or her school and attend school part-time, while also obtaining some learning or training at another place, such as TAFE. Or the student would be enrolled with his or her school but attend full-time at another learning and training provider, such as TAFE, or be linked to an employment program to develop work-related skills.

This means that the school would be responsible for providing or organising learning and training, until a student turns 16 or 17. School would be the local coordinator for learning, working with students on their individual requirements and liaising with further education and training institutions and even potential employers until the student turns 16 or 17. (See section overleaf entitled "More Support for Young People and Teachers" for further details).

This would require the school to maintain contact with a student whether in full-time employment, part-time learning or other education.

examples of excellence

The Western Cape College and Comalco

The Western Cape College was formed in response to the Wik Coexistence Agreement with Comalco. It demonstrates the many benefits of partnerships between employers and schools in terms of better education, training and employment outcomes. A key tenet of the Agreement between Education Queensland and Comalco has been the negotiation of training and employment opportunities for Indigenous students in the Cape. Comalco has set out skilling and work competency requirements. In turn, Western Cape College provides targeted learning with a view to getting young people into training and employment with Comalco. The company has made a significant commitment to train and employ all Wik students who achieve Year 10 or better. Under the Agreement, Education Queensland has also negotiated access to Sudley Pastoral Property to conduct student leadership training and development.
strategy

examples of excellence

Southside Education Centre

The Southside Education Centre, at Sunnybank in Brisbane, works with young women whose needs have not been met in mainstream high school settings. The Centre aims to re-engage young women in education or training and the community. It provides general education, vocational education and training and work experience. The Centre also aims to nurture the physical and emotional development of young women and has links with many support agencies for young people.

strategy two

More support for young people and teachers

All young people face many opportunities and challenges as they move into adulthood. These include completing initial education, undertaking further education and training, leaving the family home, finding work and forming personal relationships. Each young person deals differently with these challenges.

Some young people find it difficult to participate in the social, cultural and economic life of the community. This can be due to poor family relationships, poverty, homelessness and other problems. Often, these problems are beyond the control of young people but prevent their full participation in education and training.

We know the current education and training system does not suit all young people.

For these young people, we want to offer practical responses that will include more flexible ways of learning and training tailored to individual needs, as well as school-based education as it currently operates.

This could include: part-time school-based education and part-time work; part-time school-based education and part-time further education; part-time school-based education and a part-time apprenticeship; full-time further education with a provider such as TAFE; part-time further education and part-time employment; and of course full-time employment.

Young people need more assistance in finding the education and training combination that is right
for them. Some also need help in re-building their self-confidence and optimism.

Already, some schools work with 13 Youth Support Coordinators who provide individual support to young people, to prevent them from becoming homeless and leaving school early. These Youth Support Coordinators are funded by the State Government and employed by local community-based organisations. Principals, teachers and students tell us their work has been vital in retaining many young people in learning, further education, training or employment.

A similar, but expanded, role could be created to work hand in hand with local schools, students, families, vocational education and training providers, industry, small business and support services. In practical terms, this could include visiting local businesses seeking employment opportunities on behalf of a young person, talking to a school about part-time learning arrangements for a student, locating an apprenticeship and being aware of what vocational education is on offer locally. They could also provide one to one counselling on managing school or personal problems and connecting young people with support and welfare services.

Of course, any new role would complement the valuable advice and guidance provided to students by Guidance Officers.

The case study on page 17 shows how one community is providing extra assistance to young people.

Questions
• Do you support our proposal to provide individualised assistance to young people at risk of leaving early and not going on to further education, training or work?
• Would the role of youth worker help more students stay at school or enter full-time further education, training or work?

strategy three
Making it happen

The proposals above would require some changes in how our education and training system is operating. If we want young people to stay at school and in vocational education and training, we must improve what we teach them and how we teach them.

The Government will need to talk with individual schools, find out if our proposals are feasible and what is needed to make them work.

In particular, schools in rural and remote areas that have limited or no access to further education and training providers, such as TAFE, will require assistance. In many of these communities, there are P-10 schools and senior schooling and further education is available at regional centres.

We will also need to look closely at how our proposals will work in Indigenous communities. Already, we are trying to work in a different and more effective way with these communities - through the Cape York Partnerships Strategy, the Partners for Success policy in Education Queensland, and the Cape York Training & Employment Strategy in the Department of Employment and Training.

Each school is different - with its own student profile, links to local schools, training and further education, local employers and existing levels of services and funding. We would negotiate with schools to determine which, if any, services they would need to fill the gaps between what they currently offer and what we propose. These services could include improved career guidance, alternative schooling and behaviour management support, creating better links with business and industry, and professional development for teachers.
All the initiatives contained in this paper — early education trials, a greater investment in ICTs and proposed reforms for senior schooling — have the same goal. That goal is better education and preparation of our children and young people for life beyond school. The more preparation, skills and confidence we can impart to our young people, the greater their chances of success in further education, training and work — and life in general. We want our young people to be the best they can — for themselves — and for our collective future. That’s the basis of the Smart State.

You can play a role in preparing our young people by giving us your views on the green section of this paper.

Consultations on the green section of the discussion paper will be held until July 31 2002.

You can obtain a copy of the discussion paper or get further information by any of the following means:
1) by telephoning 1300 650 220
2) by visiting www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/smartstate/education_training
3) by writing to Strategic Directions, Policy and Research Branch, Education House, PO Box 33 Albert Street Brisbane QLD 4002
4) by participating in public forums — for dates and venues visit the website

All contributions are welcome and will be carefully considered.

summary of consultation questions

Proposal one - 16 or 17 when leaving school?

- Should young people be required to be engaged in full-time school, vocational education and training or work?

- Should we raise the school leaving age from 15 to 16?

- Should we raise the school leaving age from 15 to 17?

- Would anyone be disadvantaged by the new arrangements?

- What should be grounds for exemptions if we changed the school leaving age to 16 or 17?

- Do you support our proposal for automatic exemptions for young people who are in full-time employment or training?
• Could raising the leaving age to 16 or 17 years negatively affect any other training or employment arrangements for young people?

• If we adjust the school leaving age to 16 or 17, should the new arrangements start in the Year 2007?

• What are the things the Government needs to consider in deciding on a starting date?

Proposal two - Re-organising senior secondary schooling

• Should we re-organise the senior years of schooling to include Years 10, 11 and 12 or maintain senior school as Years 11 and 12?

• Do you agree with our proposal to use Year 10 as a "stocktake" of a student's learning?

• Do some students require this "stocktake" earlier?

• What can we do to improve coordination between all relevant sectors - school, vocational education and employers?

• Who should be responsible for driving this improved coordination?

• Should the re-organisation be introduced in 2005 or earlier?
• If we re-organise Years 10, 11 and 12 as senior schooling, what are the implications for middle schooling?

• Are there other implications related to middle schooling that we need to consider?

Proposal three - Recording achievement

• Do you think recording all of a student’s achievements, even if obtained outside of the school setting, would be useful for young people?

• Do you think this would be useful for parents?

• Do you think this would be useful for employers?

• Do you think this would be useful for further education and training providers, and higher education providers?

• What information would employers want to see recorded?

• How do you think non school-based activities should be assessed and described?

• Would we require a new assessment framework?

• Should the recorded achievements be part of the Senior Certificate?
• Or should they be available at any point during Years 10, 11 and 12?

Strategy one - School as the local coordinator

• Do you think the school should have greater responsibility for students and should be the local coordination point until they turn 16 or 17?

• Do you support our proposal that schools should actively follow up students until they turn 16 or 17?

• Does the school or the Government have responsibility to encourage the completion of a Senior Certificate after people turn 16 or 17?

• If so, how might this work?

• Would students, parents, teachers, schools, employers and further education and training providers have to collaborate more to achieve these proposals and, if so, how?

Strategy two - More support for young people and teachers

• Do you support our proposal to provide individualised assistance to young people at risk of leaving early and not going on to work, training or further education?

• Would the role of youth worker help more students stay at school or enter full-time employment or training?
consultation

expression of interest

Preparing for School trials in 2003

Fifty Preparing for School trials will be run over three years, starting from 2003. We are inviting expressions of interest from schools.

The Government seeks innovation in the design of trials with a strong emphasis on improvements in student outcomes, particularly in areas with limited access to pre-school programs. Priority consideration will be given to proposals involving low total cost, particularly in terms of capital modification.

The trials are directed at children of pre-school and/or Year 1 age in State schools and will offer services equivalent to a full school week. To allow evaluation of a range of delivery options, trials should be structured in one of the following ways:

• for students identified by teachers and/or parents as requiring additional preparation prior to Year 1;
• for the younger half of the expected 2003 Year 1 group with the older half of the group proceeding to Year 1; and
• for all children who would otherwise have commenced Year 1 in 2003.

It is also anticipated that trials will encompass a range of attributes including (but not limited to) the following:

• being located in urban, rural and regional locations, differing cultural settings, and areas with different community profiles;
• using differing class size and teacher aide time;
• involving schools without pre-school;
• involving schools able to convert existing part-time pre-school into a full-time preparatory year for the purposes of the trial and without disadvantaging people on current waiting lists;
• involving schools with or without outside school hours care;
• being provided from a pre-school room, classroom, or other space; and
• using a variety of outdoor play areas.

Thirty trials will commence in 2003. In this first round, all trials will be located on State school sites provided by either the State sector or Creche and Kindergarten Association. Future trials could include State schools working in partnership with non-State schools and private providers and could be at sites other than State schools.

In working up trial proposals, schools are required to demonstrate community support and co-ordination with other agencies for children. Parents will have the option of whether their child would participate in the trials.

All trials will be part of a detailed evaluation process. Non-State schools currently providing a full-time preparatory service will be invited to participate in the evaluation.

The closing date for receipt of expressions of interest is 31 May 2002.

You can obtain a trial application kit from 28 March 2002 or get further information by any of the following means:

1) by telephoning 1300 650 220.
2) by visiting www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/smartstate/education_training
3) by writing to Strategic Directions, Policy and Research Branch, Education House, PO Box 33 Albert Street Brisbane QLD 4002.
4) by participating in public forums — for dates and venues visit the website.