



ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

2003

1. INTRODUCTION

By sessional orders adopted by the Legislative Assembly on 30 April 2003, Estimates Committee C was appointed to examine and report on the proposed expenditure for the organisational units within the portfolios of the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and the Minister for the Arts, the Minister for Education and the Minister for Industrial Relations.

The committee conducted a public hearing on Thursday 17 July 2003 to take evidence from the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and the Minister for Arts, the Minister for Industrial Relations and the Minister for Education and their respective officers. The transcript of the public hearing can be accessed at the Queensland Parliament's Hansard web-page at www.parliament.qld.gov.au.

To examine the proposed expenditure for the organisational units allocated to it, the committee considered information obtained at the public hearing in conjunction with: budget papers and Ministerial Portfolio Statements (MPS) tabled by the Treasurer; written responses to questions on notice submitted to the Ministers by the committee prior to the public hearing; and other information provided by the Ministers.

Accompanying this report is a volume of "Additional Information" presented by the committee to the Legislative Assembly. The additional information includes the minutes of the committee's meetings, documents tabled at the hearing and answers to questions on notice asked before and during the public hearing.

2. DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND YOUTH AND THE ARTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The MPS states that the Government's top priorities are employment creation and positioning Queensland as the *Smart State*. It is stated that the Department of Employment, Training and Youth delivers on these priorities by providing opportunities for improving the working, learning and personal lives of Queenslanders.

The total appropriation for the Department of Employment, Training and Youth is \$583,500,000.

The MPS states that the central role for Arts Queensland lies in the development and implementation of cultural policy and cultural capital infrastructure programs for the Queensland Government and the administration of funding programs that support whole-of-Government priorities and policy initiatives for the benefit of the whole community.

The total appropriation for Arts Queensland is \$167,653,000.

The MPS provides the following output summary:

OUTPUT	TOTAL COST \$'000
Employment Initiatives	92,626
Vocational Education, Training and Youth Services	784,641
Assistance to the Arts	105,001

2.2 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights in the budget as proposed by the Department of Employment, Training and Youth for the 2003-04 year include:

- \$83m provided for targeted employment and skills development opportunities for Queensland job seekers through the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative;
- increase of 5% to \$102.5m for apprentice and trainee training under the *User Choice* program;
- approximately \$30m for skilling Queenslanders for the creative industries;
- \$25.5m to fund public and private training organisations to deliver training under the Strategic Priority Purchasing Program;
- continued commitment to community development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a further investment of over \$6m from training and employment initiatives;
- further funding to the *Central Queensland Training and Employment Strategy* for re-skilling and up-skilling existing workers;
- \$3.6m in training for the aeroskills industry; and
- increase funding to \$33.6m for training for rural industries providing some 3,670 student places in TAFE Queensland Institutes and Queensland Agricultural Colleges.

Highlights in the budget as proposed by Arts Queensland for the 2003-04 year include:

- \$2.1m over four years for Queensland artists and cultural organisations;
- \$1.1m over four years to the Queensland Orchestra, the Queensland Opera, Queensland Theatre Company and Queensland Ballet as part of the Major Performing Arts Company funding agreements with the Commonwealth Government;
- \$9.8m recurrent provided for the Millennium Arts Project;
- \$4m to the State Library of Queensland over four years for book stock and services;
- \$1.9m to the Queensland Museum for operational support for the Workshops Rail Museum, Ipswich;

- \$1.7m to the State Library of Queensland over three years for the Online Public Access in Libraries program;
- \$2m for a number of regional projects as part of the ongoing Regional Millennium Arts program;
- \$0.10m for the *Young Artist Cluster Space Initiative*;
- \$0.10m in matching funding over two years for the first Government arts curator, in partnership with Department of Public Works;
- \$92.6m for ongoing capital works for the Millennium Arts Project, including \$3.8m for the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre; and
- \$0.18m over three years towards the Creative Fellowship program.

2.3 PUBLIC HEARING

During the public hearing the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth, and the Minister for the Arts responded to questions from the committee in relation to a wide range of matters, including:

- selection criteria for grants made by the PFTC;
- employment opportunities provided by film production in Queensland;
- funding for public art;
- funding for the Queensland Youth Orchestra;
- funding for the Gallery of Modern Art;
- training and employment opportunities arising out of the Creative Queensland Cultural Policy;
- achievements of the Millennium Arts Project;
- the Regional Arts Development Fund;
- funding for development of contemporary music;
- establishment of Indigenous knowledge centres;
- initiatives for young people and children in the Arts;
- budget details for the Office of Youth Affairs;
- steps taken to involve youth in government decision making;
- youth development opportunities under the Cape York Development Strategy;
- numbers of apprentices and completion rates for apprentices trained in TAFEs and private training bodies;
- quality assurance in user choice contracts;
- recovery of overpayments to training providers;

- the *Breaking the Unemployment Cycle* initiative;
- the unemployment rate;
- progress of the Youth Access Program;
- the Worker Assistance Program;
- facilities at the Cooloola Sunshine TAFE, Mooloolaba Campus;
- school based apprenticeships;
- the Shared Service Initiative; and
- training in the child care industry.

3. DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The MPS states that the purpose of the Department of Industrial Relations is ‘to lead policy development and service delivery that supports safe, fairer and more productive work environments in Queensland’. The Department’s vision is ‘safe, fair and productive work environments that contribute to the social and economic well-being of Queenslanders’.

The total appropriation for the Department of Industrial Relations is \$57,214,000.

The MPS provides the following output summary:

OUTPUT	TOTAL COST \$'000
Industrial Relations Services	24,142
Administration of the Industrial Court and Commission System	6,379
Workplace Health and Safety Services	48,253

3.2 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights in the budget as proposed by the Department for the 2003-04 financial year include:

- \$0.35m for the Central Bargaining Unit to continue;
- \$0.30m for the delivery of on-line accredited public sector training throughout Queensland; and
- 2003-04 is the first full-year of the Electrical Safety Contribution and an amount of \$5.6m will be contributed.

3.3 PUBLIC HEARING

During the public hearing the Minister for Industrial Relations answered questions from the committee in relation to a wide range of matters, including:

- industrial dispute statistics;
- financial performance of WorkCover and WorkCover premiums;
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland initiatives;
- workplace health and safety in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the diving industry and rural Queensland;
- implementation of the recommendations of the Ombudsman, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and the Electrical Safety Office relating to the workplace electrocutions project;
- steps to combat non-compliance with superannuation requirements in the building and construction industry;
- consolidation of Wageline;
- the public service enterprise bargaining agreement;
- progress being made in the public sector in family friendly work practices;
- the Government Online Learning Delivery Project;
- raising awareness in the electrical industry about changes brought about by the *Electrical Safety Act 2002*; and
- Productivity Commission inquiry into workers’ compensation.

4. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The core functions and responsibilities of the Department of Education include: preschool, primary and secondary education; students with special needs; assistance to non-State education; assistance to tertiary institutions; and two statutory authorities – the Queensland Studies Authority and the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board.

The total appropriation for the Department of Education is \$4,856,172,000.

The MPS provides the following output summary:

OUTPUT	TOTAL COST \$'000
Preschool Education	117,152
Primary Education	2,172,478
Secondary Education	1,408,045
Students with Special Needs	388,380
Portfolio Services – Assistance to Non-State Education	752
Portfolio Services – Assistance to Tertiary Institutions	2,572

4.2 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights in the budget as proposed for the 2003-04 financial year include:

- the final allocation of teachers in 2003-04 to deliver the government's promise of 800 additional teachers. The funding for this initiative is \$156.2m over four years;
- \$18m over three years allocated to support the trial of a preparatory year of schooling, in addition to the \$162m for the *Education and Training Reforms for the Future*;
- \$67m for information and communication technologies (ICTs);
- a \$40.3m three year package to significantly improve outcomes for all students and support students at risk of leaving school early;
- support for improved behaviour management in schools, including: grants totalling \$1.8m; 300 behaviour management specialists; resources to support anti-violence and anti-bullying programs; flexible learning options for students;
- improved services for students with disabilities, including: \$12m for students with disabilities with additional funding in the following two financial years; \$8.2m for special education facilities at 45 schools; expanding the trial of the Certificate of Post-compulsory School Education; learning and development activities to enhance staff capacity to support students with diverse learning and social needs;
- \$155m package to continue to drive improved student literacy outcomes in State schools;
- continued support through grants to the Reading Recovery program and extension of the trial of the New Basics framework;

- implementation of Queensland Studies Authority syllabi at a cost of \$2.6m;
- investment of substantial funds in new schools and facilities as well as building improvement programs;
- assist the school workforce by means of: funding for wage rises for teaching and non-teaching staff (\$112.7m); professional development and training for staff (\$39.7m); commitment to non-teaching staff by converting long-term casual staff to permanent status; expand support for diverse workforce emphasising Indigenous Education workers; upgrade teacher accommodation facilities (\$6m); and
- distribute an increase in Commonwealth grants (\$72m for non-state schools and organisations and \$19.6m to state schools).

4.3 PUBLIC HEARING

At the public hearing the Minister for Education responded to questions from the committee in relation to a wide range of matters, including:

- increases in teacher numbers and its impact on schools;
- replacement of teachers who accessed the career change program;
- steps being taken to address behaviour management;
- capital works projects;
- the planned overhaul of school safety including a review of legislation;
- school based apprenticeships and traineeships;
- the new School Improvement and Accountability Framework;
- inclusion of students with disabilities into general classrooms and preparing students with disabilities for life after school;
- literacy levels and benchmarking;
- operation of the Queensland Studies Authority;
- Preparing for School trials;
- Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiatives;
- ambulance cover for schools;
- professional development for teachers in ICTs;
- the Girls and ICTs Framework for Action;
- the Commonwealth review of higher education and its effect on Queensland;

- the impact of the Secondary Schools Renewal Program;
- WorkCover claims;
- the Triple R program;
- electrical upgrades in schools;
- the Cooler Schools program;
- enhancing ICT support and ensuring equitable education for distance education students;
- fund raising efforts by P&Cs; and
- boys education strategy.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The committee recommends that the proposed expenditures, as stated in the Appropriation Bill 2003 for the organisational units within the portfolios referred to Estimates Committee C for examination, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The committee thanks Ministers and their staff for their cooperation and assistance during the estimates process.

Chris Cummins MP
Chair

18 August 2003

MEMBERSHIP

Mr Chris Cummins MP (Chair)
 Mr Stuart Copeland (Deputy Chair)
 Mr Gary Fenlon MP
 Ms Jan Jarratt MP
 Ms Rachel Nolan MP
 Miss Elisa Roberts MP
 Mr Peter Wellington MP

SECRETARIAT

Ms Sarah Lim (Research Director)
 Ms Tania Jackman (Executive Assistant)

DISSENTING REPORT

Submitted by:
Mr Stuart Copeland MP
Shadow Minister for Education, Youth and Multicultural Policy

Estimates Committee C – Youth

Youth Affairs Budget Reporting

The Office of Youth Affairs is afforded recognition within the Department of Employment and Training, however, it is not recognised as a separate line item in the MPS. To facilitate greater accountability and transparency in the Office of Youth Affairs it is important that government funding of youth affairs and participation initiatives are specifically stated in the MPS. If these figures are merely lumped with the overall government spending on Employment and Training it is very difficult to ensure that young people in Queensland are receiving adequate government funding for programs and initiatives.

The Minister acknowledges some sympathy for this point when questioned, however, he claims that the current format is in line with existing Treasury guidelines and does not seem willing to exercise change.

In order to enhance accountability and transparency it would be beneficial for next year's MPS to have a discrete section for the Office of Youth Affairs. Such amendments would ensure that youth receive the focus that they deserve.

Measuring Youth Participation

I note in the MPS there are two measures related to the performance of the Office of Youth Affairs that gauge the level of youth participation in Government decision making initiatives. I have some reservations with both of these measures.

Firstly, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is used as a measure of youth participation in Government decision making. While being a

fantastic scheme for young people, in reality it does not actually relate to young peoples' participation in government decision making processes and therefore I cannot see how this is an appropriate measure for Government recording.

Secondly, the MPS states that the number of young people participating in Government decision-making processes through the Youth Participation Strategy is 64,000. However, after questioning the Minister provided a breakdown of this participation which revealed that 63,359 of the 64,000 actually represented hits on the GENERATE youth web site. Out of these 63,359 hits on the web site only 132 users were actually directly involved in what could be described Government decision making processes through participating in "online chats" with Government. This therefore leaves 63,227 alleged young people participating that in reality only represented hits on the GENERATE youth web site.

The Minister defended the use of these measures through arguing that it is very difficult to accurately quantify youth participation. I can appreciate these difficulties, however distorting the participation of youth in Government decision-making processes through using such measures as hits on the youth site or membership of the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme is certainly not representative of actual participation and is detrimental to advancing youth participation in our State.

This reporting of youth participation in Government decision making processes needs to be addressed so that the figures provided are more representative of actual participation.

Estimates Committee C – Education

Teacher Numbers

Estimates questioning raised some important issues in relation to teachers allocated for growth in student population. It is concerning that the Minister revealed that there will be a higher increase in student growth in 2004 than that of 2003 but there will actually be a lower increase in teachers for 2004 than that of 2003. In 2003, there were 290 teachers that began school at the beginning of the year in response to a total growth in student numbers of 4,413. In 2004 there is a predicted growth in student numbers of 5,020, however, the MPS stipulates that only 249 additional teachers are to be allocated to meet this growth.

The Minister explained that this number of teachers stands as a prediction and is difficult to formulate with the differing needs of these new students that will require additional disability teaching support yet to be accounted. She also states that the student growth could fall in schools with already undersized classes and therefore will be absorbed with no further teachers required.

Estimates questioning on teacher number allocations also further highlighted areas of confusion in relation to the Government's delivery of promised 800 extra teachers as part of the Labor Party's 2001 election commitment. The MPS states that 147 teachers to support students with a disability were introduced for semester one 2001 as part of the Beattie Government's election commitment. However, as these teachers started work at the very beginning of term one it is very tenuous to claim these as an election commitment for an election that was held after the commencement of term one. The Minister states that the extra teachers were part of an industrial agreement reached with the Queensland Teachers Union in 2000 agreed to begin at the commencement of the next

school year. This then became an election commitment for the Government coming into the 2001 election campaign. I feel that to re-badge the industrial relations outcome as a new election initiative to address disability support in schools is somewhat misleading and certainly causes confusion in the community.

Inconsistent advice has been provided by the Minister in response to Question on Notice 1776 and the MPS regarding the numbers of Teachers required to meet both the 2001 election commitment and the predicted growth in teacher numbers. The figure supplied in QON 1776 to meet enrolment growth in 2004 was 510.6, and the figure actually provided in the MPS was 249. It is clear the numbers of teachers employed have been manipulated to ensure the election commitment has been met, but at the expense of the real numbers required to meet predicted enrolment growth.

Community Ambulance Cover

In estimates questioning it was revealed that some of the 1,300 schools across the State being levied for the Community Ambulance Cover could have to pay the levy more than once. Where a school has more than one electricity account they will be forced to pay the levy on each account they receive. The Minister and her staff acknowledged that they do not actually know how many schools have more than one electricity account and have only assumed that they will have one each.

I find this revelation concerning in terms of the financial impact it will have on some schools. The Minister stated that the State School sector will receive savings of more than \$100,000 on ambulance cover in comparison to prior ambulance cover arrangements; however, this figure is based on the assumption that each school only pays once. As this assumption could

be incorrect for many schools, the Minister is therefore unable to effectively ascertain if in fact there will be a saving for schools and just what the impact of the impost will be on schools across the State.

This highlights a total lack of investigation of the effects that the Community Ambulance Cover scheme would have on individual schools across the State. Research needs to be conducted to accurately determine what impact the ambulance levy will have on each individual school.

Mr Stuart Copeland MP

Shadow Minister for Education, Youth and
Multicultural Policy

