



Speech by

Hon. D. WELLS

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Hansard 23 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Export Education

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Education) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: Queensland is bidding to become the national leader in export education. Education Queensland is developing a strategy for a Government-led, whole-of-system approach to promoting Queensland education and training overseas. The strategy will, amongst other things, identify—

the opportunities for Queensland education in the export market over the next three to five-year period and the longer term;

priorities for market diversification, and ways to maximise the effectiveness of entry into new markets with Government support; and

ways of optimising the commercial return for Queensland education providers from the export of education and training services.

Queensland's education and training industry earns the State around \$500m annually and generates around 5,000 jobs. For this economic boost to continue and grow, it is important for Queensland to develop a State strategy for export education. Queensland has many assets which are important in the export of education. Queensland's geographical diversity, tropical environment, proximity to and familiarity with Asian markets, first-world infrastructure, our tolerant egalitarian democracy and our commitment to a good quality of life for all citizens, and the fact that we speak English, enable Queensland to become a leading provider of education services for export.

Queensland can significantly improve its competitive position nationally with a comprehensive strategy that aims to achieve national market leadership for the State's education and training industry. This strategy has not been pursued by Education Queensland in a peremptory manner. Education Queensland has worked closely with other departments, particularly with Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and State Development. This initiative will have the long-term benefit of increasing understanding and acceptance of other cultures. It will also increase their understanding and goodwill towards us. The strategy will be aimed at providing more opportunities for education providers, including: universities, which account for 56% of students; private vocational education and TAFE providers, 11%; providers of English language courses for overseas students, 14%; and private and State schools, 19%. The concentration on the school system will enhance the education system's opportunities throughout the State, providing opportunities from Cairns to Coolangatta and from Charleville to Brisbane.

In recent years, Queensland has been overly dependent upon the Asian education market. Nine of Queensland's top 10 education markets— providing 87% of our students—were in Asia. The strategy would aid Queensland in finding and improving market share in other nations, such as those in northern Europe. I have consulted with Queensland's university vice-chancellors, and we will work together to take this program forward.
