



Speech by

Hon. ANNA BLIGH

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Literacy and Numeracy

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.54 a.m.), by leave: I wish to table the Queensland School Curriculum Council report 2000: 'Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program: Statewide student performance in aspects of literacy and numeracy.' This report is prepared annually and provides the most recent results of Queensland students. The tests cover reading, writing, spelling and viewing in the literacy area, and number, measurement and data and space in the numeracy area. The main purposes of the testing program are to provide a systemic overview of student performance in aspects of literacy and numeracy and to provide students, teachers and parents with information about these aspects for the individual student involved.

In examining the statewide literacy results it is evident that year 3 students performed particularly strongly in spelling and in writing, whereas year 5 students' strength was in viewing and year 7 students were strongest in spelling. Within each of the year levels, overall performance standards were similar for the three numeracy aspects tested. In general, the average performance levels realised in 2000 were similar to the good standards achieved in 1999. The overall results for year 3 viewing, year 5 space and year 7 writing and spelling in 2000 were marginally better than those in 1999, whereas 2000 performance in year 5 writing and spelling was marginally down in comparison with 1999.

The patterns of mean performance for 2000 are also broadly similar to those of previous years. Results include the fact that girls still tend to perform at higher levels than boys in all year 3, 5 and 7 literacy areas whereas boys and girls perform at similar levels in numeracy except that boys are slightly ahead of girls in year 5 number and year 7 measurement and data; at year 3, students with English speaking backgrounds and language backgrounds other than English have similar mean scores in all curriculum areas tested; however, students from English speaking backgrounds have superior mean scores in all of the year 5 and 7 curriculum areas tested except for spelling where students from language backgrounds other than English perform marginally better; and the mean scores of indigenous students are significantly below those of non-indigenous students at all year levels and all curriculum areas tested. These data are useful and important. They provide insights into complex and multifaceted matters and need to be looked at closely in order to understand the range and combinations of factors that impact on student educational outcomes.

In contrast to the wide range of performance information emanating from the testing program, some limited reporting of results is required for the national reporting regime. To date, national benchmark reporting protocols have been established for year 3 and 5 reading, and Queensland's performance against these benchmarks for both 1999 and 2000 have been reported for the first time in the Queensland School Curriculum Council report. In 2000, approximately 92.6 per cent of year 3 students exceeded the national reading benchmark. The national benchmark results in year 5 reading for 2000 were comparable to those of 1999 with approximately 78.5 per cent and approximately 80 per cent of students exceeding the benchmark respectively.

The 1999 national benchmark results for year 3 and year 5 reading for all states and territories have recently been published in the National Report on Schooling in Australia 1999. These must not be judged superficially without due consideration of the different contexts and populations being taken into account. Queensland students are on average about six months younger and have had about 10 months less formal schooling than their interstate counterparts when these tests are undertaken.

Education Queensland and our government is committed to continuing to ensure that Queensland students receive quality literacy and numeracy education that prepares them for the future. As part of our focus on these areas, the Beattie Government has committed \$148 million in 2001-02 to ensure Queensland students have solid literacy skills through the Reading Recovery program, the development of a framework for whole of school literacy planning and a reading framework in partnership with 20 new school-based Learning and Development Centres for Literacy. Students with difficulties in literacy and numeracy continue to receive support through measures including classroom teacher devised remediation programs, teaching by specialised staff such as learning support teachers and reading recovery teachers, as well as the involvement of parents, volunteers and para-professionals in Support-a-Reader and Support-a-Maths Learner programs.

Other programs aimed at students from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds being developed and implemented include 'Which boys? Which girls?—Literacy and Disadvantage' Project, the Literacy and Numeracy Action Research Project—for students whose main language at home is not English and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students—and the Bandscales for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students Project, which developed monitoring devices for reading and writing development of indigenous students in years 1 to 3 for whom English is a second language.

The Board of Teacher Registration is also developing new standards in Literacy in Teacher Education Standards for Pre-Service Programs. There is much being done. I look forward to not only maintaining these good standards but showing further improvement on these results in future years.
