

Question on Notice

No. 773

Asked on 24 May 2007

Mr Copeland asked the Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts (Mr Welford) —

QUESTION:

- (1) How many teachers are presently the subject of sexual assault allegations against children?
- (2) What is the average length of time between referral of a sexual assault allegation to the Ethical Standards Unit and commencement of an investigation?
- (3) Are all sexual assault allegations automatically referred to both the Department of Child Safety and the police?
- (4) How many investigators are currently employed (full-time, part-time and contract) within the Ethical Standards Unit?
- (5) How many investigators were employed (full-time, part-time and contract) within the Ethical Standards Unit at 30 June 2006?

ANSWER:

- (1) My Department treats any allegations of sexual conduct very seriously and works in conjunction with the Queensland Police Service, Crime and Misconduct Commission and Queensland College of Teachers to conduct thorough investigations. The number of investigations into allegations of sexual assault represent a tiny percentage of a workforce of approximately 62,000 full and part-time teaching staff, administration and other non-teaching staff. There are currently 56 state school employees under investigation for assault offences of a sexual nature – representing less than 0.1 per cent of all employees. Sexual assault complaints can include allegations such as where an employee has brushed an arm or hand against a student or made contact with a female student's breast.
- (2) The investigation process begins when the allegation is received. An initial determination is immediately made as to whether the matter is required to be referred to the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission as sexual assault. Ethical Standards promptly refer all sexual assault allegations to the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission. The Queensland Police Service response is determined by both the nature of the alleged assault and operational factors specific to the Queensland Police Service. My department's Ethical Standards Unit may be required to investigate following conclusion of the Queensland Police Service involvement.
- (3) No. The sexual matters are referred to the Queensland Police Service and the Crime and Misconduct Commission.
- (4) The Ethical Standards Unit currently employs 11 full-time investigators. Additionally, an annual budget of up to \$280 000 was allocated in 2006–07 to engage external investigators where appropriate. The unit also accesses the services of regional staff who have received specific training to undertake investigations in a part-time capacity.
- (5) At 30 June 2006 the former Workforce Standards and Performance Unit of Education Queensland employed two investigators with most matters being referred to trained regional investigators. At 30 June 2006 the former Ethics Unit of Department of Employment and Training employed three investigators.