

Question on Notice
No. 1890
Asked on Thursday, 27 November 2008

MR JOHNSON asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Sport (MS SPENCE) —

QUESTION:

What is the education level of prisoners currently incarcerated including a breakdown of how many (a) have post-graduate degrees, (b) have degrees, (c) have a trade qualification, (d) completed high school and (e) did not complete high school?

ANSWER:

Of the approximately 5,500 prisoners currently serving a custodial sentence in Queensland Correctional Centres, 29 have post graduate degrees and 77 have graduate degrees (Around 2% of prisoners have a university education). A further 75 offenders have a trade qualification.

Of the remainder, 693 completed Year 12 (12.5%); 2499 completed high school to Year 10 (45%) and a further 2107 (38%) did not achieve a year 10 education.

While serving a custodial sentence, Queensland Corrective Services provides all prisoners, regardless of classification, with the opportunity to undertake a range of educational courses which may include literacy and numeracy, secondary education to Year 12 through the Brisbane School of Distance Education, vocational courses from Nationally Accredited providers as well as university courses.

During the 2007/2008 financial year, approximately 228,575 annual hours of curriculum were delivered to prisoners in the form of vocational education and training; with a successful completion rate of 85%. During the same period more than 262,000 hours of literacy and numeracy education were delivered at a combined cost of \$2. 866 million.

The Bligh Government is committed to the continued provision of appropriate educational opportunities to all offenders. During the 2007/2008 year there were 12, 797 enrolments in Vocational Education Courses and 10,120 enrolments in Literacy and Numeracy. In the same period there were 376 enrolments in the Brisbane School of Distance Education, 327 enrolments in University, and 4,110 enrolments in external vocational courses.

Literacy and Numeracy education may in some circumstances be offered to offenders as part of the Post Release Employment Assistance Service (Advance2Work). In addition to literacy and numeracy courses, Advance2Work provides living skills, job search and post employment placement support. The success of the skills based Advance2Work program is demonstrated by the following data.

During 2007/ 2008 878 prisoners who participated in the program were able to gain employment upon release. Of these, 640 remained in this employment beyond 13 weeks. Since July 2000, more than 3,500 former prisoners have been placed in employment with more than 3,000 maintaining employment beyond 13 weeks.