

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 1081**  
**Asked on 17 June 2011**

**Mrs Miller** asked the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr Dick) —

QUESTION: Will the Minister outline how the Flying Start for Queensland Children policy will benefit students in the Bundamba Electorate?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question and her interest in the Bligh Government's blueprint to give Queensland children a flying start to learning and life.

The Government's Education White Paper – *A Flying Start for Queensland Children* — will strengthen the State's education system and bring about exciting changes in secondary schooling.

This Bligh Government is committed to and focussed on the ongoing improvement of the Queensland education system.

Developed following extensive community consultation, the reforms have been supported by education sectors, parent representatives and key stakeholders.

The initiatives canvassed in the Education White Paper are the next step in the Queensland Government's ten-year vision to improve the education system in our state.

*A Flying Start for Queensland Children* focuses on three main objectives – getting ready for school, getting ready for secondary school and boosting performance for all schools.

For young children, the reforms consist of a range of initiatives to improve their development, well-being and school readiness.

By 2014, the Government will provide every Queensland child with access to kindergarten taught by qualified early childhood teachers.

National and international research has found experiences in the early years of life have long-term impacts on health, learning and behaviour.

Kindergarten programs, offered in Queensland through selected long day care and kindergarten services, offer a safe and caring environment in which children can build confidence in their abilities, extend their skills and have fun while learning.

The Queensland and Australian Governments are investing almost \$900 million to deliver universal access to kindergarten by 2014.

This will be achieved through the establishment of up to 240 extra kindergarten services across the state in areas where they are needed most, by providing funding to support long day care services to deliver approved kindergarten programs and other supporting initiatives.

The Queensland Government is also supporting children to effectively transition to school by providing funding to services through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme,

including nine long day care services now approved to deliver an approved kindergarten program in the Bundamba electorate.

The reforms for young adolescents centre on the move of Year 7 to secondary by 2015.

The introduction of Prep in 2007, and the increase in the Year 1 starting age in 2008, mean that students entering Year 7 from 2015 will be six months older and in their eighth year of schooling.

We believe that students at this stage of their educational and social development are better catered for in a secondary environment.

The move will provide Queensland Year 7 students with access to specialist teachers and facilities and will position them to take full advantage of the new Australian Curriculum.

Initiatives to support the transition of Year 7 into high school include the introduction of Junior Secondary for Years 8 and 9 from 2013, with Year 7 being included from 2015.

Junior Secondary will provide challenging educational offerings that are appropriate for early adolescents, while giving them a sense of belonging and support during this crucial phase of their development.

As part of Junior Secondary, there will be a strong emphasis on pastoral care for our students, and parents will be encouraged to become even more involved in their children's schooling in the high school years.

The quality of teaching is critical to the success of our young adolescent students.

Up to 500 scholarships will be provided to prepare state primary teachers for teaching in high schools.

Comprehensive professional development programs will also ensure that Junior Secondary teachers will be well equipped with the knowledge and the skills to foster the social and emotional development of their students.

The 2011-12 State Budget provides \$328.2 million in new funding to assist state schools prepare facilities for the move of Year 7 to secondary and \$293.8 million in recurrent funding, including \$81.3 million of capital assistance to non-state schools.

The Queensland Government is also introducing new measures to boost school performance and the success of Queensland students.

These measures include accrediting all Queensland schools under shared standards and establishing a new independent standards authority to monitor these standards.

Teacher education programs will also be strengthened with five Teacher Education Centres of Excellence ensuring hands-on, in-school experiences for pre-service teachers are provided.

For more information about these important changes, please visit the *Flying Start for Queensland Children* website at [www.qld.gov.au/flyingstart](http://www.qld.gov.au/flyingstart).