

Question on Notice

No. 469

Asked on 5 April 2011

Dr Flegg asked the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations (Mr Dick)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the status of maintenance work from 1 July 2009 to date in state primary and high schools—

- (1) What is the backlog of urgent maintenance work in Queensland schools?
- (2) How much money has been spent on maintenance in Queensland schools?
- (3) Will the Minister provide a list of work completed at individual schools?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

The Department of Education and Training's (DET's) highest priority is the safety of staff and students in state schools and accordingly, it has thorough and transparent maintenance management programs.

QBuild (a business unit of the Department of Public Works) undertakes a maintenance condition assessment of each school annually on behalf of the DET.

Maintenance items of an urgent nature are addressed and made safe as soon as possible, but within a maximum of 30 days. I am advised that this means there is no backlog of urgent maintenance work.

If an urgent maintenance issue is found in a school at any time during the year, the Principal will advise DET and it will be addressed immediately.

Other non-urgent maintenance work is prioritised by the school community and regional office, and systematically carried out through school-based maintenance funding or centrally managed special maintenance programs.

A total of \$224.5 million has been spent or allocated on maintenance in Queensland state schools in 2009–2010 and 2010–2011.

Schools are allocated a notional annual maintenance fund to address both planned activities which they deem a priority, and unplanned maintenance activities to rectify, for example, intentional damage and safety related issues.

DET regions support schools in managing these funds and assisting with additional funds when appropriate. Central office also holds a maintenance allocation to address workplace, health and safety issues where these are a priority.

Maintenance work is funded and managed at school, regional and central office level, comprising thousands of individual projects every year. Projects range from minor maintenance tasks such as repairing leaking taps to significant projects such as the replacement of roofs or repainting of school facilities. Given the breadth of maintenance work on thousands of individual projects, it would be an unacceptable use of resources to provide a school-by-school list of work completed for the 1,237 schools in the state system.

In addition to ongoing maintenance funding, the Bligh Government is committed to investing in capital works. More than \$536 million is being spent on capital works in Queensland state schools in 2010–11. This is in addition to the Federal Government's \$2.1 billion investment through the *Building the Education Revolution* program, which delivered approximately 4,500 projects across Queensland schools.

The Bligh Government is committed to providing education facilities that support the maximisation of learning outcomes. This Labor Government's \$850 million *State Schools of Tomorrow* (SSOT) program is the largest one-off capital investment in education to be undertaken by any Queensland Government to date. This has included 1,628 classroom refurbishments, 144 science lab refurbishments and new school facilities around the State.

This Government also supports infrastructure in non-state schools. More than \$152 million in capital assistance funding has been provided to the non-state sector since July 2009. The non-state sector was also given \$100 million contribution to improve school facilities from the Government's five-year SSOT program.