

Question on Notice

No. 775

Asked on 24 May 2011

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the pre-prep services for the 35 indigenous communities listed at <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/early-childhood/ecmpr002/prep.html>— How many students are enrolled in the pre-prep program in each community and how many eligible four year olds are estimated to be in each community?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

The Bligh Government is committed to Closing the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders.

In September 2008, Premier Anna Bligh outlined her Government's long-term vision for Queensland in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*. Q2 creates bold targets that will drive the Premier's vision for a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland.

The Government gave a commitment that all Queensland four year old children will have access to a quality early childhood education so they are ready for school. This includes Closing the Gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from some of Queensland's most remote locations.

To this end, under the *Bound for Success* education strategy, the Department of Education and Training has been delivering non-compulsory pre-Prep programs for three-and-a-half to four-and-a-half year old children living across 35 Indigenous communities.

The Queensland Government committed funding over the four year period 2006 – 2010 to make enhancements to these programs.

We have included upgraded facilities, provided new educational resources, developed a quality early childhood curriculum for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and professional development programs for educators.

These programs set a foundation for Closing the Gap in educational outcomes for Indigenous children by focusing on building bridges between children's Home Language and Standard Australian English, as a way for preparing Indigenous children for school.

I have been advised by the Department that the Pre-Prep programs in Indigenous communities generally have a high number of children enrolled.

Across the 35 Indigenous communities there are 28 state school programs, which service 30 of these communities.

The state school programs had a total of 462 enrolled, four year old children as at the February 2011 enrolment census.

The Department also works with five non-government providers to deliver pre-Prep programs, which had 75 children enrolled in Term 4 2010.

Australian Bureau of Statistics population estimates data report that in 2009 there were 600 four year old children across the 35 Indigenous communities.

Over the past few years the pre-Prep programs have maintained consistent enrolment numbers across communities. Given the consistent enrolment numbers these programs have maintained within an environment of fluctuating birth rates and family mobility, it is likely future enrolments will continue to remain relatively stable. Consequently, the Department does not produce forecast enrolment numbers for these programs.

In each community the school principal works closely with local health services to identify the families of children of eligible age and to support those families to enrol in the program.

I am pleased to report that the majority of children in these communities are accessing these high quality early childhood education programs.

Pre-Prep enrolments in selected state schools (excluding Early Intervention Students) February 2011, with four-year-olds in parenthesis:

Western Cape College – Mapoon (4); Western Cape College – Aurukun (27); Mornington Island State School (22); Doomadgee State School (26); Bwgcolman Community School (26); Pormpuraaw State School (1); Kowanyama State School (20); Tagai State College - Thursday Island Primary Campus (53); Lockhart State School (16); Woorabinda State School (0); Cherbourg State School (37); Northern Peninsula Area State College (59); Yarrabah State School (59); Tagai State College - Badu Island Campus (24); Tagai State College - Malu Kiwai Campus (0); Tagai State College - Mabuiag Island Campus (8); Tagai State College - Mer Campus (9); Tagai State College - Darnley Island Campus (14); Tagai State College - Yorke Island Campus (7); Tagai State College - Saibai Island Campus (7); Tagai State College - Yam Island Campus (8); Tagai State College - Warraber Island Campus (7); Tagai State College - Kubin Campus (3); Tagai State College - Dauan Island Campus (5); Tagai State College - Poruma Campus (6); Tagai State College - Stephen Island Campus (0); Tagai State College - St Pauls Campus (3); Tagai State College - Horn Island Campus (11).

Pre-prep figures exclude Early Intervention students.

Bamaga campus and Injinoo campus enrolments are rolled up to Northern Peninsula Area State College.

The statistics do not include Bloomfield River State School (Wujal Wujal), Western Cape College - Weipa Campus (Napranum), Tagia State College - Stephen Island Campus and Woorabinda State School which had not reported pre-prep enrolments as at February 2011.

Number of four-year-olds, Selected Statistical Local Area, 30 June 2009:

Aurukun (S) (31); Northern Peninsula Area (R) – Bamaga (20); Northern Peninsula Area (R) – Injinoo (6); Northern Peninsula Area (R) - New Mapoon (9); Northern Peninsula Area (R) – Seisia (2); Northern Peninsula Area (R) – Umagico (6); Torres Strait Island (R) – Boigu (7); Cherbourg (S) (28); Doomadgee (S) (35); Torres (S) (78); Kowanyama (S) (27); Lockhart River (S) (22); Mornington (S) (27); Torres Strait Island (R) – Mer (12); Palm Island (S) (37); Pormpuraaw (S) (26); Torres Strait Island (R) – Kubin (8); Torres Strait Island (R) – Badu (24); Torres Strait Island (R) – Erub (4); Torres Strait Island (R) – Dauan (4); Torres Strait Island (R) – Mabuiag (7); Torres Strait Island (R) – Poruma (3); Torres Strait Island (R) – Saibai (4); Torres Strait Island (R) - St Pauls (5); Torres Strait Island (R) – Warraber (10); Torres Strait Island (R) – Iama (11); Torres Strait Island (R) – Yorke (19); Torres Strait Island (R) – Hammond (3); Mapoon (S) (0); Yarrabah (S) (68); Napranum (S) (18); Wujal Wujal (S) (11); Torres Strait Island (R) – Ugar (0); Hope Vale (S) (9); Woorabinda (S) (19).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia, 2009, Cat. no. 3235.0

Estimated resident population (ERP) counts by Statistical Local Area (SLA) by single year of age were released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on 05 August 2010. At the time of writing this is the latest available ERP data from the ABS which includes counts of four-year-olds.

Data for 2009 are preliminary estimates. The ABS normally makes available revised estimates in the second year after the reference period. Final estimates will be available following the 2011 census.