

Question on Notice

No. 533

Asked on 8 August 2013

Mr Katter asked the Minister for Education, Training and Employment (Mr Langbroek) –

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise why gifted and talented children are not recognised in the Queensland Education system, by allowing assessed early entry into onsite primary school education, which would provide Queensland's gifted and talented children the same eligibility as those in other states?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

Queensland has one of the youngest Prep entry ages in Australia at 4 years and 6 months. Across Australia school starting ages vary from 4 years and 5 months to 5 years of age.

In Queensland, provisions for entry into Prep are mandated in the *Education (General Provisions) Act and Regulations 2006*. Children enrolling in Prep must be 5 years of age by 30 June in the year of enrolment unless they have previously commenced an equivalent program in another jurisdiction and are considered ready for education. This applies to all state and non-state schools.

Identifying school starting age is a complex issue, and not one that is decided lightly. We acknowledge there will be bright young children who will miss the cut-off. However, it is preferable for children to be older when they start school than to start too young, particularly with the more demanding requirements of the Australian Curriculum and appropriate alternatives in place.

Good quality early childhood education and care services can provide appropriate challenges and stimulation for children who are academically advanced for their age. The National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care, which commenced in 2012, aims to further improve the quality of early childhood services provided to children prior to their entry to Prep.

In addition, we are committed to ensuring every child can access a quality kindergarten program in the year prior to Prep. Participation in a kindergarten program is a good option for families seeking educational programs prior to the school starting age.

Once gifted children are eligible to be enrolled at school, they can be offered appropriate enrichment or extension activities or acceleration into the next year level in one or more learning areas.