

**Question on Notice**

**No. 528**

**Asked on 14 July 2015**

**MR WHITING** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR TOURISM, MAJOR EVENTS, SMALL BUSINESS AND THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES (HON K JONES) –

QUESTION:

Will the Minister inform the House on the growth in Queensland's kindergarten participation figure since 2008, and the number of eligible children enrolled in a quality education program in the electorate of Murrumbidgee?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question, and commend him for his commitment and ongoing interest in the quality education of Queensland children. It is a commitment shared by myself and a priority for the Palaszczuk Government.

Statewide participation in kindergarten programs has risen from less than one-third of all eligible children in 2008, to over 95 per cent of kindergarten aged children in 2015.

In 2009, the Bligh Government identified the real value of quality early childhood education to the lives of our youngest Queenslanders, and acted accordingly.

We knew then, as we know now, that a kindergarten program delivered by qualified early childhood teachers best prepare children for lifelong learning.

At the time of the Bligh Government's commitment, participation by kindergarten aged children in an approved kindergarten program was 29 per cent. This was only 16,700 kindergarten aged children. In 2015, this number has more than tripled.

In responding to the low participation rate – in concert with the Commonwealth Government – the Bligh Government implemented a range of significant strategies to increase eligible children's participation in an approved kindergarten program.

As Queensland's Minister for Education in 2015, I am proud that this vitally important Labor Government commitment has been realised. However, the Palaszczuk Government is committed to increasing participation in an approved kindergarten program.

A further challenge for the Palaszczuk Government in 2015 is the lack of Commonwealth Government funding certainty beyond 2017.

This lack of certainty is placing the future of early childhood education at risk, and causing unnecessary concern for Queensland parents determined to do their best for their children.

I can advise the Member for Murrumbidgee that the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme provides funding to support 427 eligible children in an approved kindergarten program within 20 Long Day Care services and four community-based services within the electorate of Murrumbidgee.