

Question on Notice

No. 1745

Asked on 15 November 2018

MR J KELLY ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on any initiatives being undertaken to support school communities that are experiencing high demand for outside of hours school care?

ANSWER:

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) services are a support for families, providing a safe and stimulating environment to care for children before and after school and during school holidays.

OSHC services are operated by either for profit or not-for-profit providers across the State in accordance with national legislation. State schools do not operate OSHC services. As OSHC services must meet the National Quality Framework, which includes legislated indoor and outdoor space requirements, many services cannot increase capacity due to lack of space.

The Department of Education is aware of the increasing demand for OSHC places at some services and is working with school communities to implement local solutions.

Given the priority of OSHC, earlier this year I established a working group of key stakeholders to examine systemic issues and implement local level solutions in areas with high demand.

The OSHC Working Group has met three times this year, and in addition to local level solutions, has implemented a range of initiatives to address systemic issues, including:

- investigating alternative options that will allow services to meet demand while maintaining safety and quality;
- ensuring school halls, often used for OSHC, are considered in Stage 1 of the design for new schools;
- enhancing procurement processes to ensure ongoing quality service provision and the ability to meet any growth in demand; and
- implementing a communications strategy to provide clear and transparent information about OSHC to parents, principals, providers and the broader school community.