

Question on Notice

No. 1742

Asked on 23 October 2019

MS L LINARD ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (HON Y D'ATH) –

QUESTION:

Will the Attorney-General advise how her department is educating young Queenslanders on how to be savvy consumers?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Nudgee for her question.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General through the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) actively engages with young Queenslanders through its *Buy Smart* Program which is designed to empower them to make smart consumer decisions both now and in the future. The program includes fair trading officers giving presentations to school students in class; engagement with teachers; the production and distribution to schools of educational materials aligned to the Australian curriculum; and the annual *Buy Smart* Competition.

During the 2019 school year, fair trading officers conducted presentations to more than 11,000 Queensland students across the state from Cape York to Winton and to the Gold Coast. The presentations were tailored and covered age appropriate topics as diverse as how to avoid scams; increasing awareness of advertising; what the difference is between a 'need' and a 'want' when considering spending money; and the consumer guarantee provisions under the Australian Consumer Law.

The OFT has conducted the *Buy Smart* Competition annually since 2002, and I was very pleased to launch the 2019 competition at Boondall State School, in the Member's electorate on 22 February this year.

The competition is open to all Queensland students in years four to 12. It requires students to research a consumer topic that interests them and to create a project that shares their newfound knowledge with a target group in an interesting and creative way. If they wish, teachers can use the development of this project as part of a lesson or as an extension piece.

Entries to the competition are lodged in three categories – years four to six, seven to nine and 10 to 12 with entrants in the running for a share in a total of over \$15,000 in prize money. The winning students and their schools in each category receive:

- First prize \$500 for the student/s and \$2,000 for the school.
- Second prize \$250 for the student/s and \$1,000 for the school.
- Third prize \$150 for the student/s and \$500 for the school.
- A total of 10, \$50 highly commended prizes.

- The Commissioner's School Champion Prize which is a \$1,500 award to one school as a special commendation for supporting consumer awareness and financial capability in its students.

Entries for the 2019 competition closed on Friday 18 September, the last day of term three, and I was delighted to host the award ceremony for the winners at Parliament House on Tuesday 22 October 2019.

The award ceremony was a great way to recognise the students' hard work and to underline the importance of consumer literacy. Invitations were extended to the shortlisted students, their families and their teachers. Members of Parliament with shortlisted students and schools in their electorates were also invited to attend to celebrate their success.

This year more than 1,000 students were involved with creating and lodging entries that were well researched, cleverly designed and which showcased the amazing talent and knowledge of our young consumers.

The OFT facilitates and encourages Queensland school's participation in the *Buy Smart* Program by ensuring topics are drawn exactly from the Australian curriculum, making it directly relevant to classroom outcomes and learning requirements.

The OFT is working hard to reach as many young Queenslanders as possible to educate them about, and empower them to use, their consumer rights. Should any Members of Parliament be interested in promoting the *Buy Smart* Program or arranging for a fair trading officer to speak at schools in their community, I urge them to seek further information from OFT's website at: www.qld.gov.au/law/fair-trading/buy-smart-competition.