

Question on Notice

No. 1332

Asked on 10 November 2022

MR L MILLAR ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to the Palaszczuk Government requiring parents seeking to secure a 2023 kindergarten enrolment to supply a large amount of personal data, including key identifiers such as their places of employment, driver's licence, Federal Government Customer Reference Numbers, Medicare numbers and private health fund customer numbers—

Will the Minister advise what steps the Minister has put in place to ensure that such data is kept safe from cyber-theft at both the governing body level and the individual campus level?

ANSWER:

Under the national Preschool Reform Agreement (PRA), each state has a responsibility to measure attendance for each eligible-aged kindergarten child and is required to collect child-level information regardless of setting.

In meeting this requirement, the Department of Education does not collect information regarding parents' places of employment, drivers' licences, Australian Government Customer Reference Numbers, Medicare numbers or private health fund customer numbers.

The Queensland Government also collects data as part of the grants claiming process. The department works with the Queensland Revenue Office (QRO) to enhance the QGrants system to enable machine-to-machine lodgement of information. The QRO is subject to whole-of-Government policies relating to privacy and cyber security.

QGrants is audited by the Queensland Audit Office and undertakes all security patching. In addition, penetration testing is undertaken by an independent organisation on an annual basis.

The submission of grant claims by services only includes information that is sufficient to ensure Queensland's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children have access to the maximum subsidy available under Kindy for All, and to ensure that the Government can meet its responsibilities under the PRA. Any data passed back to services by the department is deidentified so that it cannot be linked to a child or family should the information be intercepted.

The department and the QRO continue to work closely with the Australian Government, and Central Governing Bodies (CGBs) and services, to ensure information about Queensland children and families is kept safe. Information is only collected by the department where required either through the PRA or to ensure the appropriate subsidies are provided to each Queensland family so that cost is not a barrier to participation in a quality kindergarten program in the year before full-time schooling.

The two leading CGBs have advised the department they are limiting the mandatory information collected to only those items that are essential for families to access the full subsidies available to them, and to meet their statutory duty to the children in their care. This information could include health information regarding the child. These CGBs confirmed they have cyber security policies in place and undertake penetration testing on a regular basis.