

Question on Notice

No. 962

Asked on 1 September 2022

DR C ROWAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND MINISTER FOR RACING (HON G GRACE)

QUESTION:

With reference to projected multi-billion dollar investments being made by New South Wales and Victoria into the Early Childhood Education sector—

Will the Minister advise how the Minister will ensure that Queensland children will not be disadvantaged or end up behind their New South Wales and Victorian peers?

ANSWER:

The Palaszczuk Government is committed to ensuring all Queensland children get a great start to life by attending a kindergarten program in the year before full-time school.

In February 2022, the Government announced historic reforms to the way kindergarten is funded in Queensland, with a \$1 billion investment over five years to address participation, affordability, inclusion and educational outcomes.

I welcome the announcements by the New South Wales and Victorian governments of plans to introduce free extended access to kindergarten within the next decade. I will watch with interest to see how their implementation plans develop.

The Government is confident that Queensland children will benefit from the significant injection of additional funding into our kindergarten sector, which will commence from next year. The Palaszczuk Government's priority is to lift the educational outcomes of our most disadvantaged children, who benefit the most from kindergarten, and to make kindy more affordable.

As a prime example, our new kindergarten funding reforms include an investment of up to \$33 million over five years to expand the Kindy Uplift program from 400 to over 900 kindergarten services across the State. Kindy Uplift provides additional funding for services to better respond to the different educational and developmental needs of their children, with targeted support in five priority areas:

- social and emotional capability;
- physicality;
- thinking and responding;
- oral language and communication; and
- access and inclusion.

The Government's additional investment will complement the collaborative work underway with the Australian Government and states and territories under the Preschool Reform Agreement to improve participation in kindergarten programs and to maximise outcomes for children.