

Question on Notice

No. 1257

Asked on 12 December 2024

MR M BERKMAN ASKED MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND THE ARTS (HON J LANGBROEK)

QUESTION:

With reference to emissions reduction in Queensland schools—

Will the Minister advise (a) if the government plans to provide any dedicated funding for solar installation in schools, particularly those that did not access the Advancing Clean Energy Schools (ACES) program completed in 2022, (b) what is the status of the department's work on a corporate Utilities Monitoring Platform (including solar) for schools and (c) what other actions is the government taking to ensure Queensland schools reach net zero?

ANSWER:

I am advised:

- a) The \$168 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools (ACES) program installed nearly 200,000 solar panels across 912 Queensland state schools, reducing energy costs and contributing to the Queensland Government's 50% renewable energy sources target by 2030. In addition to this, the Department of Education (DoE) has delivered solar at all new schools that have opened since 2020. While the ACES program finished in 2022 under the previous Labor Government, the Crisafulli Government will look at all infrastructure and energy efficiency options across Queensland state schools.
- b) DoE is awaiting the outcome of a technology procurement process led by Queensland Health which aims to establish a whole-of-government Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) for a monitoring and reporting platform for utilities (energy, solar, water, waste, etc.). Such a platform will improve DoE's ability to measure, manage and reduce the environmental footprint and environmental impact of state schools and may also provide opportunities to identify cost savings for school operations. Once this work has been completed, approval will be sought to go to market for procurement of the preferred utilities monitoring platform solution in 2025.
- c) Sustainability Appropriation: \$2.32 million in sustainability funding was provided across 59 state schools and centres (of 65 schools that applied) in 2023–24. Sustainability Appropriation funding assists Queensland state schools by supporting projects to embed the Australian Curriculum cross-curriculum priority of sustainability through teaching and learning, while saving resources and money for the school, such as:
 - installation of solar and energy efficiency initiatives;
 - waste minimisation and water conservation activities;
 - carbon emission reduction through sustainable travel challenges; and
 - school landscape management and biodiversity improvements.

Green Energy: the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) manage the whole-of-government 'Supplier Electricity Retail Contract', which dictates retail energy pricing for DoE. Under the small site electricity arrangement with Origin Energy, all schools that consume less than 100MWh per annum invest in 100% green power which reduces emissions at these sites.

Under the large site electricity arrangement with CS Energy for schools that consume over 100MWh per annum, DHPW currently invest in renewable energy projects and use environmental certificates for compliance under the Renewable Energy Target scheme. From January 2029, contract arrangements will move to 100% renewable energy including the certificates which will make our large sites emissions free.

DoE is committed to delivering sustainable infrastructure with environmentally-friendly design and materials.

The *Design Standards* for DoE's educational facilities incorporate the principles of ecologically sustainable design into the design, construction and operation of education facilities, with consideration for the environmental impacts and opportunities. This includes:

- passive design measures to contribute to the efficient use of resources (e.g. building orientation, sun shading, thermal insulation);
- energy conservation and water efficiency measures targeting active reductions in energy use and water consumption, through sustainable engineering design (e.g. the use of LED lighting); and
- the use of sustainable, and where appropriate, recycled materials with consideration for embodied energy.

The *Design Standards* are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect contemporary practice, including the latest energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives. This is facilitated through technical advice, market research, stakeholder input and user feedback including standardised user feedback collected through a Post Occupancy Evaluation process.

DoE has invested \$11.7 million for a lighting replacement program across 94 sites, focusing on transitioning from fluorescent lighting fitted with T5 adaptors to LED lighting, contributing further to reduced emissions in Queensland state schools.