

## Report on performance:

# Schools



The core business of schools is providing learning programs for students to achieve system-wide and school-based learning outcomes. Schools are the locus of learning expertise and the focal point of interactions between students, parents, the community and the state education system. Schools are valuable community assets central to community learning and development.



*Department of Education Strategic Plan 2001–2005, p. 13.*

# Distinctive

Our schools have the flexibility to be innovative and distinctive in response to parent and community needs. Parents, who are the principal clients of our schools, are generally satisfied with the school that their child is attending.

In 2000–2001, 84 per cent of parents indicated that they were satisfied that their child was attending a good school. This continues the high levels of satisfaction evident in previous surveys, and indicates slight increases in satisfaction levels over time.

New schools constructed in 2000–2001 were developed in accordance with progressive philosophies on the delivery of education. Each has a distinctive planning and architectural expression that reflects new and innovative approaches to middle schooling and its importance in the preschool to Year 12 continuum. These schools have also been designed to interact with their communities through the joint use of facilities.

These new schools are based on a recognition that the developmental stage of childhood is from approximately four to ten years of age; adolescence from 11 to 14 years; and young adulthood from 15 to 19 years. Learning environment, curriculum and teaching methods in the new structures reflect these developmental phases and reduce the recognised transitional problems students experience when changing schools from Year 7 to Year 8.

These schools will offer education up to the middle-school years on one campus in buildings that have been designed to be comforting and familiar for young children by emulating the home environment. This will be the first stage of a planned cooperative network of schools offering a coordinated curriculum to the surrounding community.

Schools operating under these principles include the Calamvale Community College that will open in 2002, and Woodcrest and Bentley Park Colleges. The first stage of the new Calamvale Community College provides for preschool through to Year 9 on a single campus. It is planned to extend provision to Year 12. Other new schools such as Woodcrest and Bentley Park Colleges and Forest Lake State High School will similarly provide facilities tailored specifically to the needs of middle-school students.



### Renewing secondary schools

The Secondary Schools Renewal program is a three-year, \$141 million capital investment program designed to modernise older secondary schools.

Sixty-three secondary schools built before 1975 have been identified for inclusion in Phase 1, 2 and 3 of the program. Thirty-eight of these schools will receive between \$3 million and \$7 million towards the construction of new facilities and the substantial refurbishment of existing facilities. The remaining 25 schools will receive substantial refurbishment of existing infrastructure to the value of \$700 000.

The program has been developed in consultation with each school and its community to ensure facilities best meet the educational needs of students.

In 2000–2001, the 30 schools in Phase 1 and 2 of the program completed consultation and reached agreement on the scope of work to be undertaken. Eight Phase 1 schools have commenced construction and some will be completed by September 2001. The remaining Phase 1 schools will be completed by June 2002. Five of the Phase 2 schools have commenced construction and all of the 22 Phase 2 schools will be completed by June 2002.

Detailed planning will commence on the eight Phase 3 schools in the program and construction will be completed by the end of 2002.

The 25 schools in the refurbishment program are also classified into three stages. Construction of Stage 1

schools has been completed, Stage 2 schools will be completed by December 2001 and Stage 3 schools by December 2002.

### Creating education precincts

Education precincts are an exciting concept in education, and are the product of partnerships established between various education providers and the wider community.

The department has embraced this concept and is developing joint service delivery opportunities. High schools are being encouraged to join with other schools, universities and TAFE institutes to form education precincts.

Varsity College on the Gold Coast offers a preschool to Year 12 curriculum. The school infrastructure will feature technology embedded into the curriculum from preschool. This technology will provide students with the skills and abilities to be active and informed citizens of the 21st Century. The Department of Education, Bond and Griffith Universities, the Gold Coast TAFE, other government departments and the Delfin Property Group are working together to make this education precinct the focal point for interaction between the state education system and parents, local business and communities.

With community support, planning progressed during 2000–2001 to amalgamate the primary and high schools at Kelvin Grove. The high school already has students completing courses at QUT, the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, the Arts Academy, as well as various TAFE institutions. The amalgamation and restructuring of the schools into a preschool to Year 12 college will result in a unique precinct that will provide a focus on excellence in learning.

Another education precinct is planned for Coorparoo State School. This integrated campus will feature a networked learning community specialising in music, information and communication technology, LOTE and sport.

Our school is a participant in the Mundubbera Small Schools Cluster with three other schools. Shared activities include arts councils, sporting days, a cultural camp and Easter Day. In addition, principals and staff participate in numerous professional development in-service days.

*(Binjour Plateau State School)*

### Innovative practices in schools

The department fosters innovation at the local level by encouraging schools to maximise their relevance to the communities in which they are located. Strategically positioning the school as the centre of education in the community means providing quality teaching and learning and a school curriculum adapted to reflect the needs of local communities.

Local innovation is encouraged by:

- creating greater opportunities for community capacity building;
- building workforce capacity;
- strengthening relationships with the school community, business and industry;
- recognising, celebrating and rewarding excellent practice that have significantly improved educational outcomes for students;
- awarding grants to schools for innovative projects through the Strategic Initiatives Program, which provided more than \$260 000 to 12 projects in 2000–2001;
- supporting distinctive approaches to teaching and learning through innovative, flexible and responsive services from district offices;
- enhancing the district office structure through the Out-of-Schools Services Project.

### International activities

Twenty-seven state secondary schools throughout Queensland offer formal programs to fee-paying students from other countries. The enrolment of international students brings new learning experiences to students and staff in these schools.

Seven of these schools link with offshore programs that deliver the Queensland Year 10 curriculum in China, providing international recognition for the Queensland curriculum and for the standard of Queensland state schools.

## Outlook

The department will:

- create education precincts at Kelvin Grove and in other locations;
- expand opportunities for international exchange;
- further develop policy and guidelines to support schools to respond to the needs of their communities;
- continue the Secondary Schools Renewal program to enable schools to implement a renewed education vision tailored to the local needs of students;
- work closely with QBuild in an agreed partnership arrangement to ensure the highest quality of service to schools in the delivery of the maintenance program;
- allocate \$50 million over three years commencing in 2001–2002 to the Triple R Maintenance Program to repaint, re-roof and improve water reticulation in older state school sites.

# Community

Schools are our link with community learning. They bring together teachers, staff, parents, families and communities as partners in students' learning processes. They have strong relationships with industry and community organisations to ensure that learning programs are connected, through the school community, to the wider world.

### Partnerships with parents

Research indicates that the relationship between parents and their children's teachers can have a significant effect on learning outcomes.

The department has continued to support the involvement of parents in schools. Parents undertake roles ranging from volunteer tutors, school council representatives and tuckshop workers, to serving on selection panels for principal appointments.

Parental participation in a wide range of school activities was encouraged by an increasing number of parent liaison workers based at schools. These liaison officers are often parents themselves and perform a wide range of tasks including public relations, school-level marketing and providing assistance in conflict resolution.

A highlight of 2000 was inviting the parents to join the children in celebrating their learning by inviting them to class and school presentations of project work and special events.

*(Applethorpe State School)*

During 2000–2001, the department's network of community participation officers (CPOs) continued to enhance communication and relationships between school staff, parents and the local community. Their valued and professional service to school communities included:

- advising parents and citizens' associations;
- supporting school and advisory councils;
- in-servicing and support for parent and volunteer workers;
- establishing and maintaining networks across districts and the wider educational community;

- providing information for parents about issues of importance.

Most parents (83 per cent) were satisfied that school staff were approachable when they wanted to talk about their child. Only 4 per cent of parents indicated dissatisfaction in this area. Additionally, approximately 67 per cent of parents were satisfied that their school kept them well informed of their child's progress and a further 22 per cent expressed a neutral view about this aspect of their child's schooling. These levels of parental satisfaction were similar to those evident from annual surveys in previous years.

The department values parental input into teaching and the curriculum. In 2000–2001, 63 per cent of parents expressed satisfaction with the opportunities available to them to discuss how their child was being taught and 67 per cent were satisfied with opportunities to discuss what their child was being taught.

About two-thirds of parents (67 per cent) were satisfied or very satisfied that they had opportunities to participate in school decision making. A further 27 per cent had a neutral view.

### Partnerships with business and community groups

The symbiotic relationship between schools and their local communities continued to strengthen throughout 2000–2001.

The mutually beneficial relationships established through vocational education programs continued to prosper with local businesses supporting VET in schools at most state secondary schools.

School councils comprising parents, staff, students and invited members operated in 356 schools. These councils hold responsibility for their school's strategic direction, ensuring that it is responsive to the characteristics of their communities.

From 1 July 2000 through to 30 June 2001 there were six school councils created and 40 school councils dissolved. During the same period, 12 schools changed their School Based Management Option.

The department supported the Queensland Council of Parents and Citizens' Associations (QCPCA) through its annual grant. The association continued its crucial work of enhancing community participation in state schools by supporting individual parents and citizens' associations.

Departmental officers maintained close relationships with key executive members of other significant interest groups including the Isolated Children's Parents Association (ICPA), Queensland Parents of Persons with a Disability (QPPD) and Indigenous organisations.

The Kilcoy District Cluster of Schools budgets to employ a community liaison project officer on a temporary basis to work between the local community and the four cluster schools. The wider community is involved through activities such as talks given by the Rural Fire Department ... local Police, Ambulance and Landcare ...

*(Mt Kilcoy State School)*

The three-year Community Access Schools (CAS) project commenced in June 1998 as part of a whole-of-government community renewal program. The project facilitated the development of closer links and partnerships between the school and its community, including parents, businesses and government and non-government agencies. A number of schools are located in areas of high cultural diversity.

CAS models a range of innovative practices in community development and partnerships in 11 schools across eight sites. By generating greater access, participation and cohesion, schools have responded to the identified educational and social needs of their communities.

Examples from various schools include:

- establishing a Weekend Activities Program for students;
- developing a Service Integration Project;
- developing a Kidz Café;
- establishing a centre at the school for community learning;
- holding an African drum workshops for students and parents.

Strategies employed as part of these projects include:

- employing bilingual staff;
- train-the-trainer programs for parents to present training on cultural diversity to other parents;
- translating school materials or reports;
- establishing interagency partnerships;
- collaborating on projects with ethnic community organisations;
- developing a parents' meeting space at school;
- opening up school resources for community use.

### Supporting community environments

Many state schools received encouragement and recognition for outstanding environmental programs.

The Toohey Forest Environmental Education Centre began offering programs for schools within the Griffith University EcoCentre. This extended the statewide network of environmental centres that gives teachers

and learners experiences that they can take back into their own schools and homes and apply to their local environmental issues.

Chatswood State School won the State award for the national Readers Digest Environmental Competition with their Local Environmental Olympics project. This weed eradication project was so successful that school staff worked with Logan City Council to allow the project to be adopted by all the schools in the city.

Conondale State School was recognised as Queensland's outstanding example of a green and healthy school in awards conducted by Keep Australia Beautiful. The achievements of 11 other schools were also recognised.

Schools in the Gladstone area joined a program conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency to identify ways to create sustainable schools. They are now offering the benefits of that experience to other school communities.

Energy Action Australia, a curriculum-based energy conservation program that involves the whole school community, was launched at the Wishart State School and provides a practical approach to energy conservation.

Stanthorpe State High School entered into an agreement with the Stanthorpe Shire Council to utilise recycled waste water for its agricultural activities. This not only generated cost savings for irrigation but is indicative of the opportunities for preserving natural water resources.

## Outlook

The department will:

- support schools to develop closer and mutually beneficial school–industry linkages;
- draft a comprehensive sponsorship policy for schools;
- encourage greater support for the work of community participation officers;
- support schools in marketing themselves to their local communities;
- continue to support Community Access Schools.

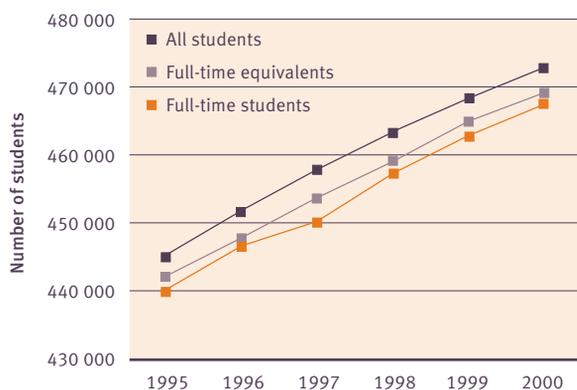
## Enrolment trends

# Enrolment

### Student numbers increase

Approximately 473 000 students were enrolled in state schools in July 2000. This represented an increase of more than 4500 students (1 per cent) in the 12 months to July 2000. In equivalent full-time terms, the number of students increased to 469 100.

Figure 11: Enrolment trends, state schools 1995–2000 (July)



The enrolment increase was due mainly to the growing population of Queensland, which had the highest growth rate of any State or Territory in Australia. Some schools expanded beyond demographic projections, due to local factors such as subject offerings or marketing strategies.

The bulk of the enrolment increase was in the primary Year levels. Primary sector growth was approximately 1.6 per cent more than in 1999, and continues the trend of similar increases over recent years. Preschool enrolments in 2000 were at similar levels to 1999. Approximately 40 700 students began their compulsory schooling in state schools in 2000. Most other primary level enrolments were at or near historically high levels.

Secondary enrolments in 2000 were similar to those of 1999. As the large cohort currently in primary schools moves into the secondary sector, secondary enrolments will increase. The February 2001 secondary enrolments were less than 1 per cent more than the February 2000 figures. The full impact of this cohort movement on secondary figures will be apparent from 2003.

In July 2000, 5600 students were enrolled part-time in state schools. Since 1995 the number of part-time students has fluctuated between 5500 and 5800, except for 1997 when the figure was 8200.

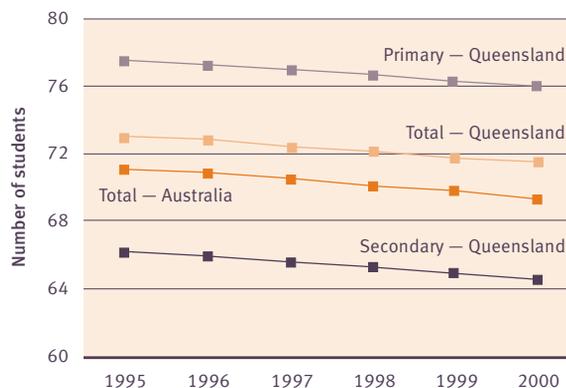
### Enrolment share declines

Approximately 71 per cent of Queensland school students attended state schools. The proportion was higher in primary than in secondary – 76 per cent and 64 per cent respectively.

The proportion of students attending state schools declined compared with the previous year and this continued a long-term trend both in Queensland and nationally, as figure 12 demonstrates.

This suggests that there are national as well as State factors affecting the trend.

Figure 12: Enrolment share of state schools 1995–2000 (July)



## Outlook

The department will:

- continue working to increase the overall quality of the educational experience and the relationship between teachers and students;
- increase Queensland state schools' market share through QSE–2010 initiatives;
- cater for an additional 4400 (0.9 per cent) full-time students that are expected to be enrolled in state schools in 2002.

# Showcase

The Department of Education has in place a number of programs that recognise and celebrate the efforts and achievements of students and staff. These programs include the annual Showcase Awards for Excellence and various awards that recognise musically and artistically talented students as well as students who excel in information and communication technology.

## Showcase Awards for Excellence

The annual Showcase Awards for Excellence recognise and reward excellent practice in state schools that significantly improves educational outcomes for students.

Sixty-seven district awards, each receiving a development grant of \$2000, were chosen from a field of 254 entries in 2000–2001. Six State finalists, selected from district winners, received a \$10 000 development grant and the six State winners received \$30 000 development grants.

The six winners were:

### *Andergrove State School – Positive partnerships produce positive performances*

Indigenous students at Andergrove State School consistently achieve to a high educational level. Their academic success is due to the school developing a support program based on strong and positive relationships between staff, parents and external agencies. Integral to the program's success is the school's homework centre, and the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teacher aides and the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

As a result of the program, Indigenous students at the school consistently achieve near State mean standards, and in some subjects they have outperformed the overall State average for their Year level.

### *Calliope State School – Preschool metalinguistics awareness program*

This program, which focuses on developing preschool students' pre-literacy skills, is achieving improved literacy outcomes for students. Calliope State School staff worked with the district speech language

pathologist to devise the whole-class program that included play activities that incorporated learning about words, syllables, sentences and rhyme.

The outcomes for students have been outstanding with Year 1 teachers noting greatly increased confidence in students' literacy skills.

### *Chancellor State School – Creating our future*

An integrated futures curriculum supported by a dynamic teaching and learning culture is delivering immediate and long-term benefits to Chancellor State School students. The school has developed a curriculum framework organised around five 'worlds' – personal, united, natural, amazing and changing. This provides sequential and balanced learning experiences for all students. Cooperatively, teachers plan units of excellence that must meet a set of criteria for excellence.

The school has reorganised its workforce and incorporated community resources to deliver the new curriculum. It has produced outstanding improvements in student learning outcomes through better teaching and learning and strong community support.

### *Mackay North State High School – Lest We Forget history project*

The Lest We Forget history project is an ongoing research and commemorative project that gives students a practical and personal view of historical events. The project is based on excursions to World War I battlefields on which Australian soldiers fought. By incorporating local history studies as well, the educational outcomes for students have been significant.

As part of the project, Modern History students visited Gallipoli and parts of France in 1999 and produced a video that was distributed to schools around Australia. Students have also developed a website on the project and are planning to produce more resources for use by history students.

### *Marsden State High School – Mathematics for human beings*

When student achievement in Mathematics at Marsden State High School indicated new teaching and learning strategies were needed, the school trialled the Constructivist method. Five years later, the improvement in student achievement in Mathematics has been outstanding. Students are now outperforming the State in the percentage being awarded High



Achievements and Very High Achievements in Mathematics A.

### *Wynnum North State High School – Student welfare teams*

Taking a personal interest in the welfare of every student has seen monumental gains in student performance at Wynnum North State High School. Teachers form student welfare teams to manage the welfare of a particular group of students. Three welfare heads of department (HOD) lead each team.

Each welfare HOD is responsible for up to 60 students and every aspect of their learning including work completion, attendance and behaviour. The approach allows the school to set high expectations for students and to give students individual support. Since welfare teams were introduced in 1998, student behaviour, achievement and industry have risen substantially, leading to improved student learning outcomes across the entire school.

### **Musically Outstanding Students (MOST)**

MOST is a biennial program for musically outstanding students from Queensland state secondary schools. The program focuses on quality music education and performance by extending and developing gifted and talented student musicians. It showcases Education Queensland's internationally recognised instrumental music program and presents publicly the highest levels of musical achievement in state schools.

Two hundred and ninety-five nominations were received from all over Queensland for MOST 2001 and 77 students were selected by audition to meet the instrumentation needs of the program. The program culminated in a Gala Concert in the Concert Hall of the Queensland Performing Arts Complex in June.

### **Fanfare**

Fanfare is a biennial festival of state school bands and orchestras that fosters the development and highlights the achievements of school-based ensembles in the instrumental music program. Fanfare promotes excellence in music performance, encourages and celebrates school-based ensemble performance, provides adjudication for each ensemble and offers all participating students the experience of performing in a regional music festival with students of other schools.

In 2000, 514 ensembles from 267 schools throughout Queensland participated, with the final five performing in the Grand Final Concert in the Concert Hall of the Queensland Performing Arts Complex.

### **Excellence in art**

The 2000–2001 Minister's Awards for Excellence in Art highlighted the selected artworks of 45 senior art students in an exhibition at the Queensland Art Gallery and a touring exhibition to ten regional centres. Approximately 157 000 people viewed the exhibition in Brisbane with an additional 35 000 visiting the touring exhibition.

The 45 students came together for a five-day workshop program in October and were presented with certificates from the Minister for Education. A CD-ROM featuring award-winning student artwork was distributed to schools.

### **Awards for technology**

The Minister's Awards for Students Excelling in Information and Communication Technology was initiated during 2000–2001 and offered scholarships to 30 senior students who demonstrated outstanding achievement in the area of information technology and multimedia communication.

The students were invited to attend an eight-day workshop program in Brisbane that included visits to organisations that are leaders in the field of communication technology. The awards culminated in a presentation at which the Minister for Education officiated.

## **SCHOOLS**

In this section, we have reported 2000–2001 progress towards the QSE–2010 **Schools objective** through:

- the establishment of more schools, improvements to schools, changes to the way schools organise themselves and more engagement in international activities;
- enhanced effectiveness of schools resulting from engagement with parents, business and community groups, and through areas of excellence;
- meeting the challenges of changing enrolments.