

report on performance

Meeting students' educational needs



Highlights

Key highlights for this objective in 2002–2003:

- › issued Certificates of Post-compulsory School Education to approximately 180 students from 63 trial schools across Queensland
- › commenced implementing the seven recommendations contained in the report *Educating Children and Young People in the Care of the State*.
- › prepared a five-year capital works facilities plan for students with disabilities
- › supported the whole-of-government response to the Cape York Justice Study, Meeting Challenges, Making Choices
- › achieved a ratio of one computer to 4.2 students for Years 8–12, exceeding the target of one computer to five students
- › allocated more than \$34 million to subsidise airconditioning in 94 state schools and \$1.88 million to non-state schools
- › contributed to the Commonwealth Review of Higher Education to ensure the sustainability of a quality national system of higher education
- › implemented a quality assurance system to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of accreditation processes for private providers of higher education in Queensland.

Objective

To ensure young people have access to a range of high-quality education experiences that meet their diverse learning needs

Department of Education Strategic Plan 2002–2006

All Queensland students deserve to have access to the best possible educational opportunities. A major focus for the department is to ensure the educational needs of all students are met. This was achieved in 2002–2003 by offering diverse learning programs, introducing technological advancements, creating flexible learning processes, and informing and working with Commonwealth authorities to meet these needs.

Improving services and programs for all our students

Strategy

Providing services and programs to meet the needs of all students including those at educational risk, those in the care of the state, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and students with special needs

Students at educational risk

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future package emphasises a commitment to supporting young people at risk of disengaging from learning. This includes providing more options and flexibility for young people as well as giving additional support to those in need. In addition to these reforms, the department implemented the following targeted strategies during 2002–2003 to address the needs of students at risk.

- › Framework for Students at Educational Risk:
The framework targets students who underachieve or disengage from school. It aims to integrate activities across all levels to improve outcomes for students at educational risk. Initiatives launched under this framework included:
 - The Boys, Gender and Schooling initiative: A website was designed to provide strategies to improve boys' learning and to support other gender equity strategies – <http://education.qld.gov.au/students/advocacy/equity/gender-sch/>
 - The Pregnant and Parenting Students initiative: In collaboration with the Association of Women Educators, the department provided funding to support pregnant and parenting students.
- › Bullying. No Way! website (www.bullyingnoway.com.au): This national website provides school communities with information about relevant issues, resources, school practices and networking opportunities likely to contribute to developing safe, supportive and respectful school environments.

- › Alternative Schooling: The department continued to support a wide range of flexible learning options for students at risk of disengaging from school. These programs included five, fully state-funded, alternative schooling sites throughout Queensland, as well as others supported to varying degrees by departmental grants. Some programs operate in partnership with councils, local community groups, churches or other government agencies. A number of non-state alternative schooling sites utilise Brisbane School of Distance Education programs and teacher support for their students.
- › Refugee Student Support Program: The department partnered with the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) to support refugee students. Greenslopes State School employed a full-time teacher and two bilingual teacher aides to support the English as a Second Language program for newly arrived refugee students. An arts therapist also assisted students to work through a process of recovery. The department supports QPASTT social and youth workers involved in specific programs at Sunnybank, Yeronga and Milpera State High Schools, which have large enrolments of refugee students.

The department also contributed to a range of cross-government initiatives in schools that support students at educational risk. These include:

Queensland Government Suicide Prevention Strategy 2003–2008

The suicide prevention strategy focuses on professional development, management and referral processes, mental health promotion and support to assist in suicide prevention. The MindMatters program promotes resilience in young people by employing a whole-school approach to mental health and suicide prevention. It aims to develop school environments where young people feel safe, valued, engaged and purposeful.

Queensland School Drug Education Strategy [www](#)

The department supports the cross-sectoral drug education strategy through a drug education website and the *Reaching Out* newsletter for administrators, teachers, parents and community members. These support materials help staff to develop and implement appropriate policies, procedures and curriculum to facilitate drug education in schools.

Responding to homelessness

The department participates in the coordinated Queensland Government response to homelessness. The department will identify and implement practices within schools that enable young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to continue their education and training.

Behaviour in schools

A key policy focus for the department is supporting improved behaviour management in schools. In 2002, satisfaction with students' behaviour at school improved with 56.9 per cent of parents satisfied with the behaviour of students at their child's school compared with 55.4 per cent in 2001— see Figure 12. Primary students' satisfaction was maintained at 37.9 per cent in 2002. Secondary students' satisfaction increased from 29.6 per cent in 2001 to 30.6 per cent in 2002. These results, while improving slightly, highlighted the need for the department to further implement strategies targeting behaviour management, and underline the importance of engaging more young people through flexible learning options.

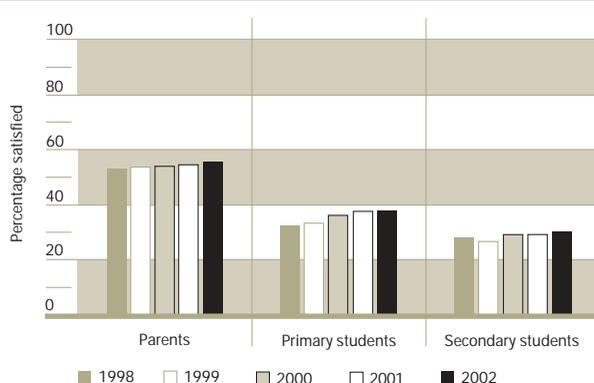
Behaviour management has been supported by:

- › implementing the Management of Behaviour in a Supportive School Environment policy
- › providing \$1.8 million in behaviour management support grants
- › assisting with school behaviour management plans
- › continuing to employ 310 behaviour management specialists to support teachers in schools
- › district and school-based professional development activities in behaviour management.

School disciplinary absences

At the beginning of term 4, 2002, a new behaviour management data collection system was introduced into state schools to monitor the level of school disciplinary absences by underlying reason. The system records the number of short suspensions (1–5 days), long suspensions (6–20 days) and the number of recommendations for exclusions — see Appendixes 11a and 11b. These appendixes provide the number of incidents of disciplinary absences and the average rate per thousand students per term, by absence reason group.

Figure 12
State school parents' and students' satisfaction with behaviour in school 1998–2002



Note: The percentage satisfied on the graph includes the proportion of those surveyed who indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. The percentage of parents and students who were dissatisfied or had a neutral view is not represented on this graph.

School support for children and young people in care

Shared responsibility across government departments is critical to achieving improved educational and social outcomes for children and young people in care. The Department of Education and the Department of Families launched a joint \$1.6 million per annum commitment, commencing in 2003–2004, to fund the core educational costs for children and young people in care. This will improve access to resources and core equipment to help students reach their full potential. The departments will also:

- › collaboratively develop a partnership agreement to clarify their roles in improving educational outcomes
- › monitor and report on the educational achievements of children in long-term care
- › raise awareness regarding responsibilities and accountabilities for improved educational outcomes.

The department has commenced implementing the seven recommendations contained in the report, *Educating Children and Young People in the Care of the State*.

Improving services and programs for Indigenous students

Partners for Success is the key strategy for improving outcomes for Indigenous students. Achievements and partnerships to improve outcomes for Indigenous students during 2002–2003 are addressed in 'Working in partnerships to improve student learning' — see page 41.

Cape York Justice Study

During 2002–2003 the department supported the whole-of-government response to the Cape York Justice Study — Meeting Challenges, Making Choices — and is now developing more appropriate curriculum strategies to help Indigenous students engage in learning.

Key initiatives under Meeting Challenges, Making Choices include:

- › working with relevant community justice groups, community councils and other agencies to develop localised strategies to improve attendance rates
- › promoting education through a number of activities including regular features in corporate publications and sponsorship of events and programs with high Indigenous participation and interest
- › facilitating the provision of meal programs where appropriate and supported by the local Indigenous community, and ensuring that nutrition is a focus within the school curriculum
- › implementing curriculum that meets the social and cultural needs of Indigenous families and communities.

Indigenous Education and Training Alliance (IETA)

IETA offers professional development and training opportunities to Education Queensland staff and members of the school community to improve the educational and employment outcomes of Indigenous students. During 2002–2003, through IETA, more than:

- › seven hundred Indigenous education workers undertook professional development programs

- › three hundred teachers, police and health workers placed in remote Indigenous communities were given high quality induction programs
- › five hundred teachers and other Education Queensland staff undertook cross-cultural awareness programs
- › two thousand teachers accessed Fostering English Language in the Kimberleys (FELIKS), Walking Talking Text, How English Works, and other English-as-a-second-language pedagogy programs
- › fifteen hundred Education Queensland staff participated in micro-skilling and classroom profiling programs dealing with behaviour management.

Partnership through sports and education

Sport is being used to improve school attendance and participation rates for Indigenous students. The Partnership through Sports and Education program encourages schools to build partnerships with Indigenous communities by coordinating sporting activities using school resources. The program is a joint initiative between the department, the Australian Sports Commission and 12 of Queensland's peak sporting bodies. It involves schools in south-east Queensland together with rural and remote communities and is a whole-of-government approach based on the key principles of sustainability and community ownership.

Students with disabilities

The State Government is committed to ensuring all students enjoy equal access to quality educational resources and services. There are a number of programs and services tailored to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities. These are offered through primary and secondary schools as well as through 288 special education units, 139 special education classes, 34 developmental programs, 221 cluster schools for physical impairment and 47 special schools.

From Semester 1 2003, this support was strengthened by the employment of an additional 173 teachers and the allocation of 4186 additional teacher-aide hours per week for special education programs. This level of additional support for students with disabilities included the first stage of the Government's \$55 million commitment over four years.

Activities associated with the Seven Point Plan — A Better Deal for Students with Disabilities also improved services and support for students with disabilities during 2002–2003. These included:

- › supporting a Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education (Students with Disabilities) which advised the Minister on ways to improve educational services for students with disabilities, learning difficulties, behaviour problems, and students at risk
- › coordinating learning and development activities through the Staff College — Inclusive Education to enhance staff capability in supporting students with diverse learning and social needs [www](#)
- › issuing Certificates of Post-compulsory School Education that recognised, for the purposes of employment or

further training, the achievements of approximately 180 students with special needs and students in special schools from 63 trial schools across Queensland.

The department has also:

- › established a new Learning and Development Centre (Information and Communication Technologies — Students with Disabilities) that provides professional development for specialist staff in the use of technology for students with disabilities
- › reviewed existing transport assistance for students with disabilities in consultation with key stakeholders. A number of changes are being trialled in selected districts, and a comprehensive submission for changes to the policy and practices is anticipated in term 4, 2003
- › completed capital works projects for special education facilities at a cost of \$7.9 million.

New partnership arrangements with community service providers have assisted students with disabilities in non-state schools — see page 31.

Learning difficulties

The department helped students experiencing learning difficulties by:

- › providing learning support teachers in secondary schools with online information, strategies and materials to identify and support students in the middle and senior phases of schooling who are experiencing learning difficulties
- › implementing recommendations from the report *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: Impact and Implications for Queensland* [www](#)
- › contributing to the Ministerial Taskforce on Inclusive Education through the learning difficulties/disabilities sub-committee.

Gifted and talented students

During 2002–2003, the department endorsed the recommendations contained in the report, *Expanding Possible Futures: A Review of Education Queensland's Policy on the Education of Gifted Students in Queensland Schools*. Recommendations included:

- › integrating education for gifted students into current policy initiatives
- › informing Queensland educators of the range of provisions currently available to identify, extend and accelerate learning
- › disseminating research and classroom resources relating to gifted education
- › rewriting the existing policy to emphasise accountability measures.

The report acknowledged the expertise available in the eight Learning and Development Centres (Gifted and Talented). These centres together with a working party will play a key role in implementing recommendations from the report.

The department will:

- › commence planning and construction of special education facilities at 45 schools as part of the \$50 million, five-year program to upgrade special education facilities
- › increase funding for students with disabilities under a seven point plan to \$11 million in 2003–2004, \$16.5 million in 2004–2005 and \$22 million in 2005–2006
- › fund, through the Education and Training Reforms for the Future grants program, innovative local responses for young people at risk of disengaging from learning
- › improve access and participation for children in care by further implementing recommendations from the *Educating Children and Young People in the Care of the State* report that help to identify and contribute to meeting their education costs
- › support training programs delivered by IETA to equip teachers with the resources and skills necessary to teach Indigenous students who use English as a second language
- › expand the Indigenous Sports Development program from 12 to 15 sporting bodies
- › implement the recommendations from *Expanding Possible Futures: A Review of Education Queensland's Policy on the Education of Gifted Students in Queensland Schools*
- › contribute to Meeting Challenges, Making Choices by supporting ongoing cross-government initiatives and community capacity building.

Creating safe, supportive and diverse learning environments

Strategy

Improving school learning environments and facilities

School learning environments and facilities

Safe and supportive school environments enhance student achievement and improve teacher morale. Parent and student satisfaction with school safety is a key measure of performance. Figure 13 shows that primary students' satisfaction with safety at school increased during the past five years from 73.2 per cent in 1998 to 76.5 per cent in 2002. In 2002, 59.2 per cent of secondary students felt safe at school and parents' satisfaction has remained over 80 per cent since 1998.

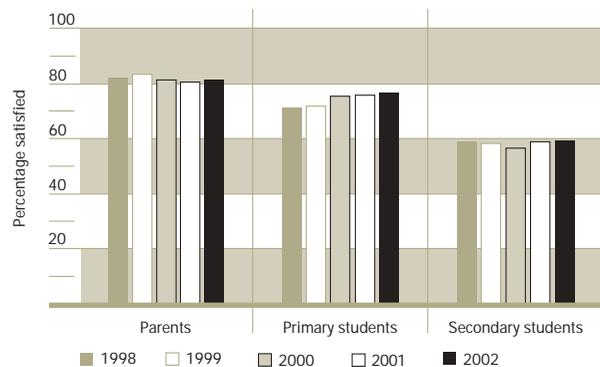
During 2002–2003 the department undertook a number of initiatives to strengthen its commitment to providing a safe and supportive learning environment. This included:

- › developing a school security policy
- › developing new security design guidelines
- › extending the distribution of School Watch educational and promotional materials through Security Advisors
- › establishing a consultative group with the Police Arson Squad to exchange information, analyse incidents and trends and develop strategies for managing arson.

New facilities

More than \$240.3 million was allocated in the 2002–2003 Capital Works Program, resulting in more than 105 additional classrooms at existing schools and a new preschool at Upper Coomera and a second preschool at Hercules Road State School — see Figure 14.

Figure 13
State school parents' and students' satisfaction with safety at school 1998–2002



Note: The percentage satisfied on the graph includes the proportion of those surveyed who indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. The percentage of parents and students who were dissatisfied or had a neutral view is not represented on this graph.

Figure 14
New facilities in 2002–2003

New schools	New school stages	New and upgraded schools and preschool
Upper Coomera State College (P–8)	Bentley Park College Centenary State High School Flagstone State Community College Forest Lake State High School Narangba Valley State High School North Lakes State College Pacific Pines State High School Pacific Pines State School Tamborine Mountain State High School Tannum Sands State High School Varsity College Woodcrest College	Hercules Road State Preschool Centre Glenella State Preschool Centre Upper Coomera State College Preschool



Upgrading and maintaining facilities

Improvements to existing facilities occurred through the following initiatives.

Triple R maintenance program

\$50 million has been allocated over three years from 2001–2002 to 2003–2004 as part of the Triple R maintenance program to repaint schools, replace deteriorated roofing and improve water reticulation systems. In 2002–2003, approximately 340 state schools benefited from this program at a cost of more than \$15 million. Upon completion of the program in June 2004, facilities in more than 800 state schools will have been improved.

Secondary Schools Renewal program

The Secondary Schools Renewal program has refurbished facilities established before 1975 and constructed new signature buildings at these schools. The program encompassed 63 of the state's older secondary schools. Work was completed, or is due for completion, at 16 schools at a cost of \$38 million in 2002–2003.

Cooler Schools

The Cooler Schools initiative is detailed in 'Delivering to the Outback' on page 33.

Increasing ICT access

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play an important role in education as a tool for thinking, learning and communicating. The implementation of the ICTs for Learning strategy [www](http://www.education.wa.gov.au), a component of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future, resulted in improved ICT services and support for schools. During 2002–2003:

The department is committed to providing safe and supportive school environments that enhance student achievement.

- › seven hundred and thirty classrooms (375 primary and 355 secondary) were cabled to provide access to the Internet for more than 18 000 (9250 primary and 8750 secondary) students
- › thirteen thousand new computers were purchased under a bulk procurement process that provided schools with cheaper computer systems
- › implementation of the curriculum Standard Operating Environment (SOE) commenced to allow remote support and reduce technical support requirements — approximately 250 schools are operating in this new environment.

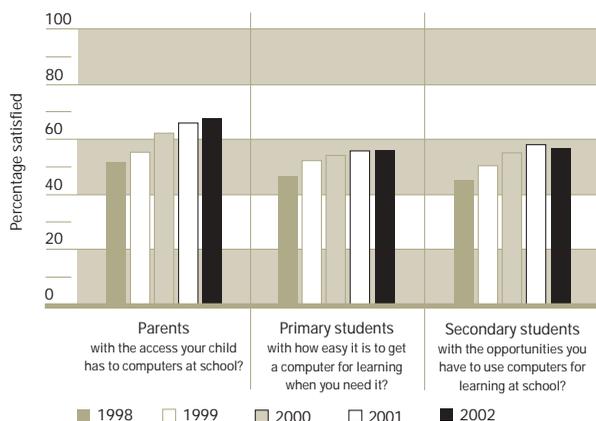
Student-to-computer ratios

The department made a commitment to replace 19 400 of the oldest school computers between 2002 and 2005. To date, 13 000 have been purchased to further improve the department's student-to-computer ratios. The department achieved a student-to-computer ratio of one computer to every 4.2 students in Years 8–12, exceeding the target of one computer to five students. The overall ratio for Years 3–12 is currently one computer to every 5.2 students, nearing the target ratio of 1:5.

Access to computers

Since 1998 parents and students have been increasingly satisfied with access to computers. In 2002, 66 per cent of parents and 55 per cent of primary students were satisfied with access to computers at school. Similarly, 57 per cent of secondary students were satisfied with the opportunities to use computers at school. These satisfaction levels reflect an increase of between 8 and 12 per cent of students' and parents' satisfaction with access to computers at school since 1998 — see Figure 15.

Figure 15
State school parents' and students' satisfaction with access to computers 1998–2002



Note: The percentage satisfied includes the proportion of those surveyed who indicated that they were either satisfied or very satisfied. The percentage of parents and students who were dissatisfied or had a neutral view is not represented on this graph.

Data services

During 2002–2003 the department commenced EdNet — the replacement and upgrade of the enterprise data network that connects schools across the state. EdNet consists of four components — Internet access, carriage services, Managed Internet Services (MIS) and facilities management. Increasing the number of local area networks (LAN) in schools maximises student and staff access to the information services available through EdNet.

The department is leading other Australian educational systems with the implementation of its new MIS in May and June 2003. MIS now provides a wide range of Internet services to all state schools with more than 559 000 email accounts established for teachers, students and parents and citizens' associations throughout the state. MIS enables:

- › Internet access for all staff and students in schools across a private network
- › content-filtered web browsing that can be customised by individual schools
- › website hosting for schools, staff and students (2000 websites)
- › antivirus protection that detects and destroys up to 89 000 viruses a month.

Supporting diverse learning environments

Assisting students in non-state education

The Education and Training Reforms for the Future initiatives heralded a new level of cooperation and collaboration between the department and non-state schooling bodies. New partnership arrangements have been formed between the department, state schools and non-state schools that extend opportunities for young people. Non-state schools are participating in the trial of a full-time preparatory year of schooling and reforms to the Senior Phase of Learning, and are strongly represented on reference groups and working parties informing the reform initiatives. Collaboration is also continuing through the following programs.

Recurrent funding

The department distributed general recurrent funding to support the education of approximately 193 000 students in 446 non-state schools throughout Queensland. In 2002–2003, a total of \$261.4 million was distributed to non-state schools based on a per capita allocation (77.5 per cent) and a needs-based component (22.5 per cent) — see Figure 16.

The needs-based component is determined according to the school's Commonwealth Education Resources Index; Commonwealth socioeconomic status score; school isolation; the number of students with disabilities, English as a second language, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds; and the number of students receiving boarding fee concessions. New options for determining the needs-based component were explored in 2002–2003 and will be further investigated in 2003–2004.

Capital funding

Capital assistance is provided to assist non-state schools to meet their infrastructure requirements. In 2002–2003, total capital assistance allocated to non-state schools was \$26.314 million — see Figure 16. This funding was administered by two capital assistance authorities (CAAs) — the Queensland Catholic Capital Assistance Authority and the Independent Schools of Queensland Block Grant Authority. Capital assistance was provided through:

- › the Capital Assistance Scheme (\$22.041 million)
- › the External Infrastructure Subsidy Scheme (\$2.393 million)
- › the Cooler Schools program (\$1.88 million).

Annually, each CAA provides recommendations to the Minister on capital assistance applications for various projects.

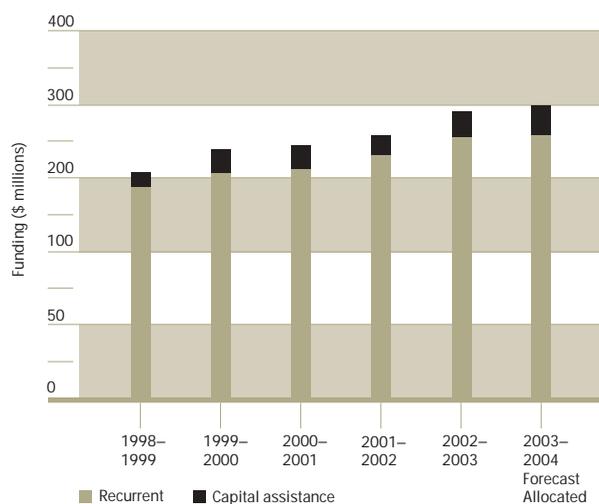
Support for students with disabilities

The department, through the Office of Non-State Education, provides assistance for students with disabilities through the general recurrent grant, disabilities initiatives funding and support for the following community organisations:

- › Autism Queensland
- › The Centre Education Program
- › The Association for Childhood Language and Related Disorders
- › Noah's Ark Resource Centre
- › Royal Queensland Bush Children's Health Scheme
- › Specific Education Learning Difficulties Queensland
- › Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Queensland.

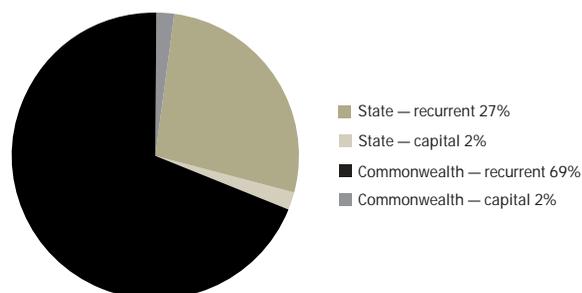
Over the next four years, an additional \$5 million will be distributed through the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland to support educational services for students with a disability in non-state schools.

Figure 16
Growth in state assistance to the non-state education sector



Note: Increase in non-state education recurrent funding is mainly due to increased enrolments.

Figure 17
State and Commonwealth funding to non-state schools 2002–2003



Other funding

In 2002–2003, the department provided a total of \$2.89 million to external and community organisations to support educational initiatives and programs. Approximately \$550 000 was provided to 29 non-profit community organisations for a range of educational programs relating to media and the arts, public speaking, science, the environment, business enterprise, the promotion of healthy child development, and sport.

The department also provides assistance through:

- › hostels for students living away from home
- › living away from home allowances, such as remote area living allowances, travel allowances, and tuition allowances
- › textbook and resource allowance for secondary students.

Furthermore, the department is responsible for distributing Commonwealth funding to non-state schools. The relative percentages of Commonwealth and State Government funding provided to non-state schools in 2002–2003 are indicated in Figure 17.

Outlook 2003–2004

The department will:

- › improve school learning environments and facilities through a capital works program totalling \$257.2 million including completing the construction of new schools at Chancellor State School and Somerset Drive, Mudgeeraba, and relocating the school at Welcome Creek to Moore Park
- › fund the Triple R maintenance program to improve state and non-state school environments including restoring and preserving public buildings
- › fund a new three-year \$45 million Smart Schools Renewal Program for state primary, secondary and special schools which builds on the Secondary Schools Renewal Program and Building Better Schools programs
- › connect 870 classrooms to the Internet by extending local area networks (LANs) in schools that have limited access to networked computers
- › undertake a broad review of State Government recurrent funding. This review will consider the ‘basket and nexus’ mechanism and the distribution mechanism (including the needs-based component) used to allocate the funds to schools
- › implement the school security policy through statewide workshops.

Delivering to the outback

Strategy

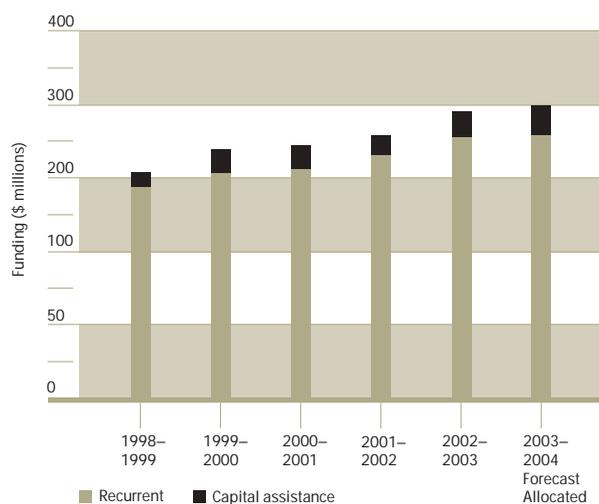
Enhancing access to opportunities and facilities for schooling, higher education and training in regional and remote areas

Queensland’s rapidly growing but dispersed population poses unique challenges for education. Almost one-third of the state’s students live outside urban and regional centres and attend schools located in rural and remote areas. During 2002–2003, the department maintained its commitment to improving the quality of education in rural and remote areas by reviewing education strategies in these areas, continuing to improve facilities, increasing access to information and communication technologies through the ICTs for Learning strategy and Virtual Schooling Service, and assisting students who live away from home to study.

The Rural and Remote Education Standing Committee

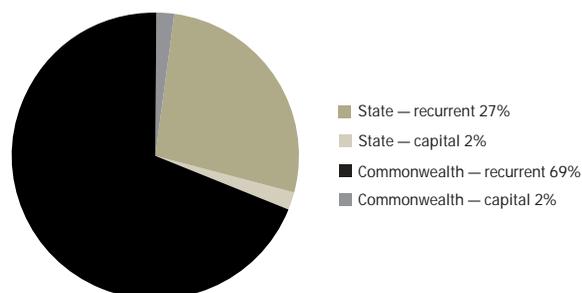
The Rural and Remote Education Standing Committee was established in February 2003 to provide advice on, and input into, the development of a draft Rural and Remote Education Strategy. The standing committee is chaired by the Assistant Director-General, Strategic Policy and Education Futures and has representatives from various sections of the department that are responsible for rural and remote education initiatives.

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The strategy aims to ensure that all students living in rural and remote areas of Queensland have equitable access to quality education services and opportunities. The standing committee has:

- › improved the coordination of systemic policies and programs for rural and remote education
- › provided high-level recognition and support for local innovation and successful practice
- › disseminated information and examples of best practice to rural and remote schools and communities.

The Bypassing Trial

The Bypassing Trial continued during 2002–2003 in consultation with communities and the Isolated Children’s Parents’ Association. The trial assists students to bypass 15 small isolated secondary schools and live away from home to complete secondary schooling in larger centres. The trial will test whether bypassing can increase the proportion of rural and remote students who successfully complete Year 12 or an equivalent, and make the transition to work and further study. The bypassed schools are supported through the Outback Learning Network, which aims to expand secondary curriculum delivery options to provide pathways for those students who remain at their local school.

Cooler Schools

During 2002–2003, more than \$34 million was allocated to subsidise airconditioning in 94 state schools as part of the department’s commitment to improve students’ comfort and create environments that are more conducive to learning. In the same period, funding of \$1.88 million was also allocated to subsidise airconditioning in 31 non-state schools. As at 30 June 2003, more than \$135 million had been allocated through the Cool/Cooler Schools program since 1996.

ICTs in the Outback

With almost 1300 schools stretching from the Gold Coast, inland to Mount Isa and north to the Torres Strait, access to information, curriculum and innovative delivery methods for rural and remote areas is a key focus for the department.

Providing students in rural and remote areas with equitable access to quality educational services and opportunities is a priority for the department.

Virtual Schooling Service

The Virtual Schooling Service (VSS) delivers online senior school subjects to students at schools where teaching expertise in certain subject areas is not available. Expansion of the VSS during 2002–2003 resulted in greater curriculum choice for secondary school students. Key strategies include:

- › i-School which provides real-time and independent schooling delivery to students and has:
 - increased the number of available subjects to seven by including Year 11 German
 - increased participating schools from 63 to 82
 - increased participating students from 393 to 480
- › i-Support which provides online support for students, teachers and support staff, including career education and literacy, numeracy and social skills programs.

ICTs support trial

The ICTs support trial commenced in January 2003 to evaluate sustainable and innovative ICT infrastructure and support initiatives. The first phase of the trial, conducted in 23 remote schools, tested initiatives developed to provide an integrated approach to technical support. These initiatives involved:

- › recruiting school-based technicians
- › providing remote support
- › installing the curriculum Standard Operating Environment
- › consolidating help desk support.

The second phase of the trial is being conducted in metropolitan schools and will continue until December 2003. Conducting the trial in two distinct geographical areas will assist the department to develop a diverse support model, thus ensuring the needs of schools statewide are met. To date, the trial has improved turnaround times on technical support, reduced support requirements, and improved the availability and reliability of ICTs.

Improving distance education

Increased demand for online learning and the rapid emergence of digital technology are having far-reaching effects on the development and delivery of distance education. Digitisation improves learning experiences through individualised instruction, increases curriculum choices, and reduces the time required for teachers to provide feedback to students. The first phase of the Distance Education Enhancement Project involved the digitisation of existing distance education assignment materials for primary school students.

Funding was provided for the ICTs for Learning strategy to support distance education families (in approved distance and medical categories) by:

- › providing an annual subsidy to approximately 900 families to assist with the purchase, upgrade and replacement of computers for use by students in the home classroom. The first payment of this subsidy was made in April 2003. In addition, these families will be provided with free access to Microsoft software
- › converting, over two years, all six regional schools of distance education from high frequency (HF) radio to telephone teaching

Access to universities for rural students

For Queensland to maintain its position as the Smart State, all students throughout the state must have access to higher education. Queensland's nine universities have 16 regional and 10 metropolitan campuses. A growing proportion of the state's regional population is participating in higher education — see Figure 18.

During 2002–2003, the department provided approximately \$768 000 to the University of Queensland, Gatton Campus to support the delivery of pre-tertiary programs. The programs are two-year certificate courses in various areas including agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture and are offered as alternatives to a full degree or as a bridging program to a full degree. Each year, approximately 40 students enrol in these programs.

Other rural and remote departmental initiatives

Funding of \$7 million for new and upgraded teacher accommodation facilities was provided to attract teachers to,

and retain them in, rural and remote areas. This ongoing issue is being addressed through a number of strategies, including:

- › Remote Area Incentives Scheme
- › the Bid O'Sullivan Scholarships for Year 12 rural and remote students training as teachers
- › online professional development and workshops
- › Remote Area Teacher Education Program (RATEP)
- › Priority Country Area Program Pre-Service Forum.

The department also offered assistance tailored to meet the needs of rural and remote students, including:

- › the Living Away from Home Allowances Scheme
- › transport assistance programs
- › the Student Hostel Support Scheme.

Yarrabah State School

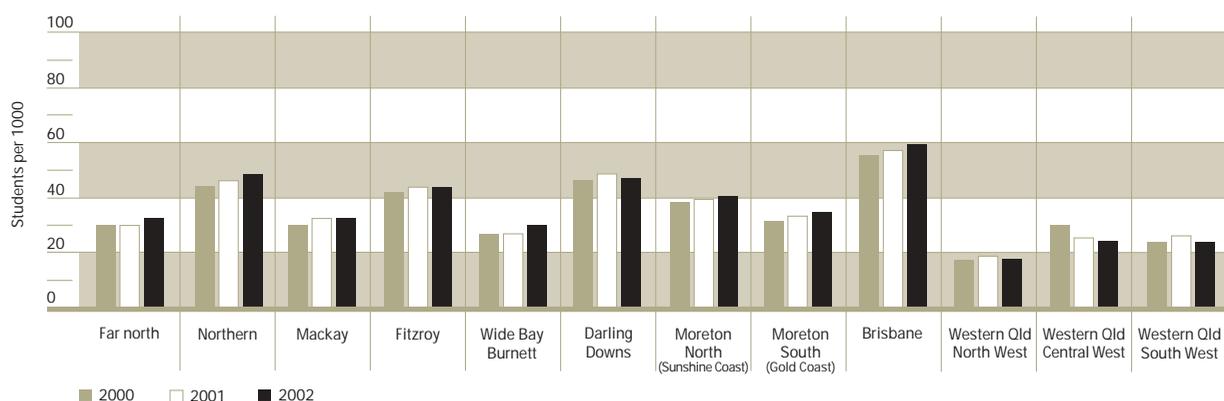
With a \$45 000 ICT Innovators Grant, Yarrabah State School is developing a Virtual Trails online project. Students use digital cameras, videos and the Internet to re-create the historical walking tracks used by local Indigenous people to travel to neighbouring areas.

The project will enlist all students and the extended school community in locating these tracks and creating 'virtual trails'. As part of their research, students will record interviews with community Elders and local landowners and work closely with the Yarrabah Community Council and the Menmuny Museum.

The project website will become a 'virtual keeping place' for significant resources about local Indigenous history, culture and traditional knowledge. The Internet will make information about Yarrabah's community and culture more accessible to a wide audience, including Indigenous communities, schools within Australia and overseas, and tourists.

Figure 18

University students by region of origin (permanent residence), as a proportion of the population, Queensland 2000–2002



Note: The data shows the number of locals and expatriates of a region attending university in Queensland, per 1000 of the regional population.

Queensland Open Learning Network

Strategy

Supporting the Queensland Open Learning Network*

* Queensland Open Learning Network is now referred to as Learning Network Queensland.

Learning Network Queensland

Learning Network Queensland's principal purpose is to extend learning opportunities to Queensland's dispersed population. Approximately 50 local communities in regional, rural and remote areas have improved access to a wider range of learning opportunities for their students as a result of expanded services provided through Learning Network Queensland. This year, the department provided assistance to programs focused on improving students' success in securing employment or further education and training. These included:

- › improving the business, computing and job-seeking skills of more than 300 mature age students by extending the availability of the Planning Your Career program to 21 communities throughout Queensland
- › developing the basic information technology (IT) skills of approximately 1000 learners across 52 communities through the BITES program (basic IT enabling skills for older workers) accessed via the network's permanent and satellite centres, and other partner arrangements
- › finalising preparatory work in developing a pre-tertiary program (Unilearn Foundation Course) for Chinese students.

Outlook 2003–2004

The department will:

- › complete round four of the Cooler Schools program, installing airconditioning in 99 state schools and 50 non-state schools by the end of 2004
- › commission an independent report on the impact of the Bypassing Trial in term 2, 2004
- › finalise and release a Rural and Remote Education Strategy
- › enable the transition to digital delivery of distance education under the Distance Education Enhancement Project, including the infrastructure and call costs to convert to telephone teaching
- › fund subsidies to enable distance education families (in approved distance and medical categories) to purchase, upgrade or replace computer systems
- › provide an additional \$6 million to improve employee housing.

Strategy

Encouraging flexibility and autonomy in the ways individual schools, clusters of schools, and education and training providers arrange the learning process

This strategy is addressed in 'Working in partnership to improve student learning' section on page 40.

Strategy

Ensuring professional networks support development of effective education experiences

This strategy is addressed in 'Strengthening organisational capability' section on page 52.

Working with the Commonwealth

Strategies

- › Monitoring Commonwealth funding of higher education opportunities
- › Ensuring Commonwealth authorities are informed of Queensland's needs

Commonwealth review of higher education

A national review of higher education was commissioned by the Commonwealth during 2002. The review focused on sustainability, quality, equity and diversity within the Australian higher education sector. This provided an excellent opportunity for the department to work more closely with the Commonwealth to determine how the needs of a dispersed population and higher education system in Queensland could be better met.

The Minister for Education, in conjunction with the Brisbane Institute, engaged stakeholders across Queensland in this debate by hosting two state forums on the review. The department also led the preparation of the State Government's submission to the review. Policy advice was provided to the Minister and the State Government on all aspects of the review, including an analysis of the major outcomes of the review contained in the 2003 Federal Budget.

Negotiating Queensland's share of Commonwealth funds

The department made representations to the Commonwealth Government regarding the allocation and conditions of Commonwealth funding for schools for the period 2005–2008. As a result, the Commonwealth will maintain indexation arrangements providing approximately \$430 million (10 per cent) of the costs for state schools, and \$780 million (70 per cent) of public funding for non-state schools. The department will continue to ensure Queensland's interests are advanced in Commonwealth–state negotiations.

Higher education accreditation

Strategies

- › Accrediting higher education awards offered by non-university providers
- › Supporting the accreditation process for universities and university courses

Accreditation and approval activities

The State Government sets standards for establishing and recognising universities, for accrediting university-level awards offered by non-university providers, and for the operation of overseas higher education institutions in the state. On behalf of the Minister, the department manages processes that help ensure that Queensland's higher education sector achieves and maintains a standard recognised nationally and internationally. [www](#)

During 2002–2003, 21 higher education courses offered by six non-university providers were accredited or reaccredited. Four of these were new providers in Queensland. A full summary of activities in higher education approval processes is provided in Appendix 7.

Application to establish a university

The Office of Higher Education provided secretariat support to the independent panel established by the Minister for Education to assess the proposal to establish a private university in Cairns. The office also liaised with other relevant state agencies and other parties to support the work of the panel.



The department works with the higher education sector to ensure the state is recognised both nationally and internationally for the standard of its tertiary institutions.

Reviewing legislation

A comprehensive review of the legislation that underpins the Government's quality assurance and regulatory framework was undertaken in 2002–2003. The *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 1993* was reviewed for compliance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes and in light of the recommendations arising from the 2001 audit of the department's higher education accreditation approval activities by the Australian Universities Quality Agency. The resultant Bill, the Higher Education (General Provisions) Bill 2003 was introduced to Parliament on 27 May 2003. The Bill provides for an improved quality assurance framework, with more detailed and transparent provisions regulating the operation of overseas and interstate institutions in Queensland, and the establishment of new universities.

Implementing quality assurance

During 2002–2003, the accreditation unit within the Office of Higher Education designed and implemented a new quality system to improve the overall quality assurance processes for dealing with applications for the accreditation of higher education programs delivered by non-university providers. The quality system was based on the major findings and recommendations of a trial quality audit of the office undertaken by the Australian Universities Quality Agency.

Outlook 2003–2004

The department will:

- › develop a new accreditation regulation and set of guidelines to reflect the provisions of the *Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2003*
- › work with the higher education and the vocational education and training sectors to develop suitable accreditation arrangements for associate degree programs.