



The Honourable Rod Welford MP



Queensland
Government

26 SEP 2006

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000



Minister for Education
Minister for the Arts

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 9 August 2006 enclosing the petition lodged with the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 8 August 2006 numbered 630-06. I am aware of this petition and individual responses have been sent to a number of the petitioners.

I would like to reiterate in my response that the Government is implementing two significant educational reforms for the early years. From 2007, it is providing every Queensland child with the opportunity to access a full-time Preparatory Year and, in 2008, is raising the school starting age so that children are generally older when they begin school and the starting age is more closely aligned with the majority of states.

Children born in 2001 are eligible to attend preschool or other early childhood programs this year and will be expected to start Year 1 in 2007. Queensland's current preschool program has for many years effectively prepared children for full-time schooling. Most children leave early childhood programs such as preschool ready to go on to Year 1.

However, some children, especially those born in the latter part of 2001, may not be ready to make the move to Year 1. Parents concerned that their child won't be ready for Year 1 in 2007 were asked to lodge an application to determine if prep is a more suitable educational placement for their child.

Over 90 per cent of these applications have been approved for the child to commence prep in 2007 and parents have been informed. The remaining parents are working with their local school principal to finalise the submission process. The decisions considered all the information provided by the parent, as well as information from principals, preschool teachers, and where applicable child-care and kindergarten personnel or other professionals who may have provided advice on the child's readiness for formal learning.

The timelines for this process were brought forward by the Government in response to parents seeking an earlier decision on applications.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Rod Welford MP

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