

Queensland the Smart State: Education and Training Reforms for the Future. A White Paper

Queensland. Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2002

Overview of the document

White Paper outlining proposed Government reforms in education and training, in summary form (pp. 6-10), in graphic form (pp. 10-11), and in fuller form with assorted brief case-studies (pp. 12-25). The paper concludes with a summary of consultation and the Pitman and Gardner reports. 19 specific actions are itemised.

Keywords

Senior Certificate; Senior Stage of Education; Fresh Start; Senior Agreements; curriculum; mentoring; disengagement; vocation; training; TAFE.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Notes the necessity of Year 12 or some kind of substantial vocational or university qualification, that at least 10,000 young Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 years are not in school, training or work and that in 2000 the government set a target of 88 percent for school completion, but that in 2002 the actual rate was 73 percent.
- Notes that during consultation period, two reports were completed: the Pitman Report (The Senior Certificate: A New Deal) and the Gardner Report (The Review of Pathways Articulation). Notes that of the 99 recommendations made, 62 are supported in this paper, 22 are partially supported and it is argued that 10 need further consideration.
- Notes that this paper aims to present a range of options to help young people to achieve the academic or vocational education qualifications they need to compete in the world of work, and to recognise a broader range of previous learning achievements.
- Overviews the rest of the report in summary form.

A SNAPSHOT OF THE REFORMS

- Presents a diagram summarising the proposed reforms. (pp. 10-11)

EDUCATION AND TRAINING REFORMS FOR THE FUTURE

- Notes the background to the White Paper as follows: “To ensure that young Queenslanders are fully equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world, we are creating one of the most flexible education and training systems in Australia. The package of reforms...includes 19 specific actions that will be implemented through partnerships between schools, TAFE, universities, young people, parents, employers and local communities” (p. 12)

ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Details the aim of all young people completing Year 10 and then going on to gain at least a Senior Certificate or a Certificate III and outlines Action 1 as follows:
 - Action 1: “We will introduce new laws that:
 - make it compulsory for young people to stay at school until they finish Year 10 or have turned 16, whichever comes first
 - require young people to then participate in education and training for a further two years; or until they have gained a Senior Certificate; or until they have gained a Certificate III vocational qualification; or until they have turned 17
 - provide exemption for young people who enter full-time work after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.” (p. 13)
- Notes that these changes will take effect for students who enter Year 10 in 2006.
- Notes that the definition of education in the Senior Phase of Learning will be expanded and outlines some of the broader range of learning opportunities which may be included.
- Stresses that changes will not force “reluctant or disruptive students” to remain in the classroom or mean a lowering of standards of behaviour. (p. 14)

THE GOVERNMENT’S COMMITMENT

- Notes that the Government will provide better preparation for children before they enter school so they can achieve more in their early years and outlines the follows Actions:
 - Action 2: “We will provide new foundations for Queensland children entering school and consider a preparatory year of schooling”. Notes that the preparatory year is under trial and if successful would replace preschool education. (p. 14)
 - Action 3: “We will take a new approach to teaching and learning in the middle years of schooling.” Notes that the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Educational Renewal is to report on a range of matters by June 2003 and there will be new initiatives for Year 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy. (p. 15)
 - Action 4: “We will ensure completion of Year 10 to provide a solid foundation for future learning by:
 - building Year 10 as a transition to the Senior Phase of Learning
 - requiring schools to develop individual student plans for the Senior Phase of Learning...these plans will be developed and agreed to during Year 10
 - requiring schools to register young people with the Queensland Studies Authority during Year 10 so their progress can be monitored and

achievements recorded in the Senior Phase of Learning” (p. 15). Notes that the QSA will develop an assessment and recording framework for lifelong learning skills in the Senior Phase of Learning. (p. 16)

- Action 5: “We will establish the quantity and quality of education and training that students must achieve to receive a Senior Certificate. This will take effect from 2006.” (p. 16)
- Action 6: “We will record a broader range of learning, including learning in school, vocational education and training, and other learning that will count towards a Senior Certificate, from 2006.” (p. 17)
- Action 7: We will allocate extra funding to the Queensland Studies Authority to:
 - design a system so that students’ achievements can be banked with the Authority
 - provide students and their parents or guardians with easy access to information about their achievements and progress toward a Senior Certificate.” (p. 17)
- Action 8: “We will enhance learning options that provide greater flexibility to meet the needs of even more 15- to 17-year-olds.” (p. 18)
- Action 9: “We will work with communities to develop localised services and better access to education and training for young people in rural, remote and Indigenous communities.” (p. 19)
- Action 10: “We will enhance distance, online and virtual education provision.” (p. 20)
- Action 11: “We will ensure that more young people who undertake vocational education and training in schools achieve qualifications that are highly regarded by industry.” (p. 20)
- Action 12: “We will provide more school-based apprenticeships and traineeships.” (p. 21)
- Action 13: “We will improve the recognition of learning and qualifications between the education and training sectors.” (p. 21)
- Action 14: “We will investigate ways of giving young people equitable, affordable access to vocational education and training in schools and TAFE.” (p. 21)
- Action 15: “We will provide an employment program to assist young people who are at risk of disengaging from learning or who are not served by formal education and training options.” (p. 22)
- Action 16: “We will help young people improve participation in learning and achieve qualifications” (p. 22). Notes that this includes through engaging up to 100 additional youth support workers, assisting schools and TAFE institutes to coordinate vocational education and training and enhance career guidance and counseling and establishing a grants program to trial initiatives that improve participation, retention and attainment for 15- to 17-year-olds in learning.
- Action 17: “We will make schools, TAFE institutes and other participating vocational education and training providers the local coordinators for reviewing, monitoring and implementing Senior Education and Training Plans.” (p. 23)
- Action 18: “The Government will foster a Community Commitment to young people building partnerships at the local level” (p. 24). Notes that young people who have entered employment without qualifications need to be encouraged to return to learning by having their previous achievements

recognised and discusses working together and building new community partnerships.

- Action 19: “We will develop District Youth Achievement Plans that will set local targets for participation, retention and attainment in education, training or employment programs.” (p. 24)

THE WAY AHEAD

- Discusses making these reforms a reality and notes that there will be an immediate start for:
 - “developing the new Senior Certificate that will report achievements in school and vocational education and training, and could include work and other learning”; and
 - “improving access to information about students’ achievements.” (p. 25)
- Notes that while the legislative changes will not come into effect until 2006, the Government will start implementing the White Paper reforms through trials in six selected areas across the state from Semester 2, 2003. Notes that these will include:
 - “local initiatives to improve participation, retention and attainment for students in the Senior Phase of Learning”;
 - “implementing District Youth Achievement Plans”; and
 - “building Year 10 as the transition to the Senior Phase of Learning, including developing Senior Education and Training Plans, and registering students with the QSA.” (p. 25)
- Advises that the other reforms will be implemented by 2006, including the introduction of the new Senior Certificate and new legislation.

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

- Provides a rundown of views expressed in the consultation process. (p. 26)

SUMMARY OF THE PITMAN AND GARDNER REPORTS

- Notes that the Pitman report on the Senior Certificate and the Gardner report on the links between senior schooling and further education, training and work, were released in August, 2002 and that a total of 72 recommendations encompassing eight broad areas are contained in the Pitman report and 27 recommendations are contained in the Gardner report.
- Notes that in August 2002, a series of stakeholder meetings were held and that the recommendations were broadly supported. Lists those for which concerns were expressed and notes that the following from the Pitman report were supported:
 - changing the criterion for the award of a Senior Certificate from a time-based to an achievement-based system;
 - central ‘banking’ of learning credits;
 - the establishment of a Senior Phase of Learning;
 - Senior Plans;
 - the concept of recording achievements occurring outside school settings; and
 - enhanced support for disengaged students (e.g. the Fresh Start and mentors).
- Notes that those not supported included: the inclusion of experiential learning and generic skills in the Senior Certificate; that all sit the QCS test; and that learning in the Senior Stage of Education be exclusively under the auspices of the school.
- Notes that this White Paper incorporated 62 recommendations fully and 22 partially (many to be taken forward as broad policy directions), reserved 10 for further consideration and rejected 5 (relating to the QCS test and the auspices of the school).