

Tuesday 8 June 2010

State Budget: barely treading water while the education tide rises....

The 2010/2011 Queensland State Budget announced today failed to provide funding for a raft of education “initiatives”, both federal and state-based, being forced on schools.

QTU President Steve Ryan said the budget contained no extra funds for implementing the imminent national curriculum, nor for providing staffing for the mandatory LOTE teaching recently announced by the Queensland Government.

“Queensland state school teachers and principals are aware that these may be challenging times in a recovering economy; in the same way, the state government should be aware that schools simply cannot keep implementing new programs and meeting increasing expectations without any new resources,” Mr Ryan said.

“Education’s share of the total state budget has in fact fallen to only 23%: it is unreasonable then to expect schools to do more and do better with even less.”

Mr Ryan said while the government appeared to be prepared to fund programs considered politically popular but of questionable educational value, such as summer schools, so-called “turnaround teams” and a handful of science coaches, it continually failed to fund long-term issues of critical importance to the day-to-day job of teaching, including maintaining buildings, improving student behaviour and reducing class sizes.

“The budget for staffing increases of 264 FTE teachers will barely cover student growth in terms of increasing enrolments and the support needed for students with special needs; it certainly will do nothing for giving schools flexibility in staffing to reduce class sizes where that would have clear educational benefits,” Mr Ryan said.

“Queensland schools have seen great benefits from the federally-funded Building the Education Revolution school capital works program; but how are those same schools supposed to maintain their bright new buildings when their maintenance budgets are actually falling? How will they fill their new libraries when the schools grants budget hasn’t even kept pace with inflation?”

