

Queensland: Implementation Plan - 2022

PRESCHOOL REFORM AGREEMENT - 2022 TO 2025

PART 1: PRELIMINARIES

1. This Plan is a schedule to the Preschool Reform Agreement 2022 – 2025 (the Agreement) and should be read in conjunction with the Agreement. It covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022.
2. The Agreement reaffirms a national commitment to provide universal access to, and improved participation by, children in quality preschool programs in the year before full-time school (YBFS), with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and disadvantaged children. These programs should be delivered in a manner that meets the needs of children, parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation.
3. The objective of the Agreement is to facilitate children’s early learning and development and transition to school by maintaining universal access to quality preschool programs for all children, improving participation in preschool programs and maximising the benefit of the preschool year by improving outcomes for children.
4. The Agreement supports the delivery of 15 hours a week, or 600 hours a year of quality preschool programs, by a degree qualified early childhood teacher for all children, regardless of the setting in which programs are delivered, in the year before school.
5. The Agreement has a focus on improving preschool participation and outcomes including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and disadvantaged children.
6. This Implementation Plan (Plan) is the first of four annual implementation plans that will build on each other to deliver the reforms outlined in the Agreement.

PART 2: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS OF THIS PLAN

7. This Plan will commence as soon as it is agreed between the Commonwealth of Australia, represented by the Minister for Education and Youth, and the State of Queensland, represented by their Minister for Education.
8. As a schedule to the Agreement, the purpose of this Plan is to provide the public with an indication of how the State of Queensland demonstrates its capacity to achieve and deliver the outcomes of the Agreement.
9. This Plan will cease on completion of the final performance reporting and the processing of final payments against the performance benchmarks or milestones set out within it for 2022.
10. The Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment and central agencies will develop a new template for Implementation Plans from 2023 in consultation with States and Territories. The Commonwealth will require new and additional information in

accordance with the Preschool Reform Agreement and the Federal Funding Agreements Principles from 2023.

11. This Plan may be varied by written agreement between the Commonwealth and the responsible State Minister.
12. The Parties to this Plan do not intend any of the provisions to be legally enforceable. However, that does not lessen the Parties' commitment to the Plan and its full implementation.
13. States may also use this section to clarify or elaborate on how terms or definitions for 'Disadvantaged children' and 'Preschool program' are realised in their specificity within that jurisdiction as per the Agreement (Definitions, p.15 of the Agreement refers).

For the avoidance of doubt, in Queensland:

- a *preschool program* extends to preschool programs delivered by an approved provider operating under a waiver under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, delivered on-line via the School of Distance Education (e-Kindy and e-Kindy pods), preschool programs delivered in hospitals, and state school delivered kindergartens; and
- *Disadvantaged children* includes children experiencing vulnerability, and for the purposes of performance assessment, refers to children attending a preschool service that reside in the bottom two Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD) deciles.

PART 3: FUNDING CONTRIBUTION

Commonwealth Funding Contributions

14. The Commonwealth's estimated total financial contribution to the State of Queensland is set out in Tables 1a (program year) and 1b (financial year) of the Agreement.
15. However, the Commonwealth's financial contribution in individual program years is adjusted in accordance with the notes to Tables 1a and 1b of the Agreement. Consistent with the agreed adjustment process, the final amounts for 2022 are set out in **Table 1**.
16. The Commonwealth contribution can only be moved between years with the agreement of the Commonwealth.

Table 1: 2022 Commonwealth financial contribution to the State of Queensland

Category	Amount ¹
Estimated YBFS Contribution	\$83,414,971
Adjustment to Estimated YBFS Contribution	N/A
Top-up to maintain 2021 levels	\$1,542,801
Implementation Project funding	\$6,000,000
Total Budget	\$90,957,772

¹Figures may not add due to rounding.

17. Table 2 should be used to show how the State of Queensland will use Commonwealth funding to meet the objectives of the Preschool Reform Agreement. This may include strategies to facilitate preschool attendance by children in the year before full-time school.

Table 2: Program/activities objectives and outcomes

Program/ activity	Outputs	Objectives	Outcomes	Estimated C'th funds allocated
1 Contribute to Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS) for the delivery of 15 hours a week, or 600 hours a year of quality preschool programs.	Implementing accessible quality early childhood education programs that meet the needs of parents and communities at a cost which does not present a barrier to participation, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.	To facilitate children's early learning and development and transition to school, by maintaining universal access to, and improving participation in, affordable, quality early childhood education programs for all children	All children, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children, have access to, and can participate in, an affordable, quality early childhood education program, regardless of whether programs are delivered through schools (non-government and government), standalone kindergartens or long day care centres.	\$83.414M
2 Contribute to the continued delivery of relevant strategies, programs and/or actions as described in table A.	Raising awareness of the importance and value of participating in a quality kindergarten program.	Delivering strategies and actions targeting cohorts less likely to enrol or regularly attend a quality kindergarten program.	Targeted cohorts benefit from strategies, programs and/or actions that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitate kindergarten transitions, enrolment and attendance; and/or • promote the value of early childhood education programs, including kindergarten; and/or • lift the quality of early childhood education programs and services; and/or • improve children's outcomes; and/or • positively contribute towards achieving the objectives and performance / reporting obligations under the Preschool Reform Agreement 2022-2025. 	\$1.542M

State context and funding contributions

18. Context influencing Queensland's delivery of preschool and the state's investment in preschool for 2022 is covered in this section.
19. In developing this Implementation Plan consideration has been given to the current context for service delivery in Queensland:
 - a) Queensland has made substantial progress towards universal access to kindergarten, improving from the lowest baseline nationally of 29 per cent in 2008 to exceeding its overall participation target of 95 per cent since 2013. In 2020, there were 63627 (96.2%) children enrolled in kindergarten, which includes 5486 (101.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and 10932 (83.6%) children residing in low SES areas.
 - b) Provision of kindergarten programs is through a mixed-market approach including for-profit long day care centres, not-for-profit long day care centres, community-managed stand-alone kindergarten services, and some state and non-state schools.
 - c) The Queensland Government delivers face-to-face kindergarten programs in schools located at least 40 kilometres by road from the nearest approved kindergarten, in selected, discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or other selected communities where there are barriers to accessing kindergarten. In addition, isolated children remain able to access a kindergarten program through distance education (eKindy).
 - d) The Queensland model of kindergarten provision has been found to be of lower cost compared to other jurisdictions, mainly reflecting greater delivery in Queensland through the long day care sector (Deloitte Review of National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, 2014).
 - e) The cost of the provision of kindergarten programs in Queensland is shared between families (through fees), funding under the Agreement and funding from the Queensland Government.
 - f) Services offering an approved early childhood education program (i.e. compliant with the requirements of universal access and regulated under the National Quality Framework) can apply for funding under the QKFS regardless of delivery setting.
 - g) The QKFS satisfies the Commonwealth Funding Follows Child obligations under the Preschool Reform Agreement noting it:
 - provides an equitable, transparent, and robust system to ensure all kindergarten-aged children can access a quality and affordable kindergarten program;
 - is designed to assist approved kindergarten program providers with the cost of implementing and delivering an approved kindergarten learning program, regardless of setting, to improve lifelong learning outcomes and support positive transition to schools for Queensland Children;
 - provides a per-enrolled-child subsidy to the service where the child is enrolled, regardless of setting, at a rate that exceeds the Australian Government's per child contribution;
 - comprises a standard per-child subsidy, with additional subsidies provided based on the service and child's circumstances (e.g. remoteness, low socio-economic areas, health care card holders, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children) – information on the available subsidies can be found on the Queensland Department of Education's website;

- provides payments to long day care services in arrears based on actual enrolments, and payments to community kindergartens in advance based on enrolment projections and reconciled against actual enrolments at the end of each semester; and
 - must be spent on an approved purpose (e.g. fee reduction, attracting and retaining a qualified early childhood teacher), monitoring, compliance and performance requirements as outlined under the Funding Category guidelines (available on the Queensland Department of Education website).
- h) Queensland is large in size and has a relatively decentralised population, with 36 per cent of Queensland's resident population living outside major cities, in contrast to the national average of 27 per cent. This requires kindergarten to be delivered in regional, remote and very remote areas. In Queensland, 15 per cent of kindergarten enrolments are in such areas, compared to a national average of 9 per cent (2020 ABS Preschool Report).
- i) Access and transportation to a kindergarten in regional and remote areas in Queensland can be particularly challenging. For example:
- a. in very remote areas, the average distance to the nearest Queensland kindergarten service is approximately 98 kilometres,
 - b. in regional areas, the average distance to a long day care is 30 kilometres compared to 0.9 kilometres metropolitan areas; and
 - c. in regional areas, the average distance to the nearest community kindergarten is 12 kilometres, compared 1.9 kilometres in metropolitan areas.
- j) Queensland's particularly dispersed populations have given rise to targeted programs, such as the state delivered Remote Kindy, and e-Kindy programs, which require significantly higher investment per-child.
- k) Queensland's vast distances and smaller populations contribute to low enrolments and attendance, and consequently, service viability issues in regional and remote areas. Half of Queensland's remote services had eight or fewer enrolments in 2021, creating significant viability issues across remote Queensland.
- l) Access and quality are impacted by distance from metropolitan areas. As a result, regional, rural and remote students are more likely to start school as developmentally vulnerable.
- m) Queensland also has a relatively large proportion of Australia's four-year-old population in two key demographic groups – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (29 per cent) and children living in rural and remote areas (33 per cent). Queensland's share of four-year-old children living in disadvantaged areas nationally (21 per cent) is slightly higher than its share of the total four-year-old population (20 per cent).
20. Queensland's approach to maintaining universal access to early childhood education and delivering on the reform priorities under the Agreement is outlined in Table A and Table 4 below. This approach has been developed in the context of other Queensland Government services and existing reforms detailed in **Table B**.

Table A: Queensland actions to deliver on the Preschool Reform Agreement:

PRA Reform priority	Description of Queensland strategies, programs and actions
<p>1. Funding follows child</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, providing subsidies for approved kindergarten programs across a range of settings through the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (QKFS), which in response to demand allows for an increase in the number of approved kindergarten program places. • Building on the success of the QKFS, Queensland will begin work with the Early Childhood Education sector to implement a new funding reform package to commence from 1 January 2023. The new scheme will support the PRA reforms by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ continuing to provide per-enrolled-child subsidy to the service where the child is enrolled, regardless of setting, at a rate that exceeds the Commonwealth's per child contribution, with additional subsidies provided based on the service and child's circumstances; ○ aiming to increase participation and attendance by addressing affordability and inclusion, with a focus on low- and middle-income families, children with disability, and children experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability; and ○ aiming to improve educational outcomes for all children, with a focus on children experiencing disadvantage.
<p>2. Facilitate kindergarten participation (attendance and enrolment)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating access to an affordable kindergarten program regardless of the child's circumstances or where they live: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ providing QKFS and QKFS Plus subsidies for approved kindergarten programs in low socio-economic areas; remote and very remote communities; families/children with Health Care Cards; families with multiple births; families/children who identify as Indigenous; and eligible refugee and asylum seeker families ○ providing funding to support eligible standalone and volunteer-managed kindergarten services ○ providing access to 31 kindergarten programs for children living in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities ○ continuing delivery of quality kindergarten programs in 102 rural and remote state schools ○ further expanding the number of kindergarten programs delivered in rural and remote state schools to include state schools at least 40 kilometres by road from the nearest approved kindergarten, in a selected, discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or other selected communities where there are barriers to accessing kindergarten. ○ continuing the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Scheme to support children with disability, and services that deliver inclusive programs. ○ continuing to deliver kindergarten activities to children who are patients at the Queensland Children's Hospital and Mater Children's Private Brisbane Hospital who are unable to access a kindergarten program due to health-related circumstances ○ continuing the e-kindy program (distance education) for children in rural and regional locations who cannot easily access a centre-based program due to distance, medical condition or itinerant family lifestyles ○ continuing the e-kindy pod program, which provides socialisation opportunities for e-kindy enrolled children in selected rural and remote locations ○ maintaining accredited kindergarten program guidelines, with amendments progressed as required to ensure alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum

PRA Reform priority	Description of Queensland strategies, programs and actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the value of enrolling in and attending a quality kindergarten program, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ incorporating state-wide marketing and communications strategies, to promote the value of early childhood education, playgroup, kindergarten programs, careers in teaching and drive demand for kindergarten participation ○ continuing the social marketing campaign to encourage participation in early learning and kindergarten programs ○ continuing to review communications campaigns and developing and implementing targeted communication activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, regional and remote and vulnerable and disadvantaged communities to encourage participation in early learning and kindergarten programs ○ continuing the deadly kindies marketing campaign in partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), leveraging their successful Deadly Choices brand to promote the importance of kindergarten and early childhood education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
<p>3. Improving children's outcomes, including through lifting service quality and capability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kindy Uplift program provides \$40 million in funding over three years to almost 400 selected kindergarten services to respond to the educational and developmental needs of kindergarten children. Funding will be used by services to purchase evidence-based programs, resources, supports and professional development to build educator capability, support inclusion and improve children's learning and development. It is estimated that up to 13,500 children will benefit from the program each year. • Assisting with transition to kindergarten and school – connecting the schooling sector with local ECEC services to encourage and strengthen the transition from early childhood education and care to kindergarten and to school • Continuing funding to Early Years Places to deliver integrated services for families with children aged from birth to eight years of age in more than 50 locations across Queensland. • Delivering a coordinated and strategic response to align K-P (Kindergarten to Prep Year) priorities including successful transitions and enhanced continuity of learning and development for young learners • Continuing to support the ECEC sector to increase and retain the number of qualified early childhood teachers to support access to kindergarten programs, especially in rural and remote communities. • Continuing to support children and families from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds to access quality early childhood education programs, including facilitating better access to kindergarten, and building service capacity to better respond to their needs.

Table B: Links with existing reforms or projects

Existing reforms or projects	Description
KindyLinQ	A facilitated playgroup program for children in the year prior to kindergarten focused on enhancing the confidence and capabilities of families to support their children's development and learning and support families to connect with and participate in approved kindergarten programs.
ECEC Workforce	Every Queensland child has access to quality early years services through initiatives that develop the capacity of Queensland's early childhood education and care workforce. Queensland will continue to implement key workforce initiatives (in line with the National Workforce Strategy) to ensure that every Queensland child has access to quality early years services by developing the capacity of Queensland's early childhood education and care workforce.
Early Years Places	The Queensland Government funds organisations throughout the state to deliver integrated services and programs which may include ECEC, child and maternal health and family support. Targeted services are delivered and/or brokered for vulnerable children and families, and referrals are made to specialist or intensive support services when required. Early Years Places focus on children's learning and development and support for families.
First 5 Forever	First 5 Forever is a universal family literacy initiative in Queensland aimed at supporting stronger language and literacy environments for young children from 0-5 years and their families. 320 public libraries will receive additional resources to deliver First 5 in partnership with the State Library of Queensland and local government councils.
Continuity of learning	To strengthen continuity of learning and successful transitions to school, investment in projects across all seven regions will focus on delivering a coordinated approach to maximise children's engagement in learning and to enhance outcomes.
Australian Early Development Census (AEDC)	The AEDC is a national collection of information on young children's development in Australia. Data is collected every three years on children in their first year of full-time schooling. The results provide a snapshot at a community level of how children are developing by the time they reach school. The AEDC data is used by early childhood services to engage their community and plan actions to better support local children and their families.
Play Stars	Play Stars is an initiative delivered by Playgroup Queensland in partnership with Queensland Government. Playgroup Queensland is funded to provide every family in Queensland, with a child under one year of age, with 12 months free membership to Playgroup Queensland; increase access to playgroup in communities where families may be experiencing vulnerability; and, provide a range of programs in a range of formats to support diversified family needs including online resources that are aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework. Playgroups are a universal, cost-effective early intervention activity that support young children's learning and development through play, building parenting support networks, encouraging greater participation in early childhood services and supporting transition to kindergarten.

Implementation Project Funding Contributions

21. This section will include a State's summary of details of implementation project funding provided by the Commonwealth including funding amounts and purpose. States will be required to provide details of how Implementation Project Funding will be used to deliver reforms, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and timing. Details will be captured at **Table 3**.

Table 3: Overview of Implementation Project Funding for State of Queensland - Statement of Allocations (updated by 31 January 2022)

Implementation Project (details)	Commonwealth funding	Actions (incl. deliverables)	KPI	Timing (incl. delivery schedule)
Sector systems upgrades and support	\$2.5 million	Support Queensland community kindergartens to modify or introduce systems to manage kindergarten enrolment and attendance data, to align with arrangements under the Preschool Reform Agreement, once agreed. Sector support during transition and sector preparedness for commencement of national attendance data collection reforms, once agreed.	Community kindergartens transition to electronic data management systems. Provision of high quality and robust enrolment and attendance data by long day care and community kindergarten services.	2022 to 2025
Queensland Government systems upgrades	\$3 million	Upgrades to Queensland's preschool grants management system to satisfy new national data collection and reporting requirements, once agreed.	Collection of improved enrolment and attendance data.	2022 - 2023
Data collection management	\$0.5 million	Support development and implementation of new national data reporting systems.	Transition to new national data collection platform, once agreed and developed.	2022 – 2025

22. Consistent with the terms of the Agreement, Commonwealth funding for Implementation Projects will be provided as part of the first milestone payment of the Agreement, subject to the Commonwealth and State agreeing to this Plan.

Risk Management

23. The State of Queensland will actively identify, monitor and manage the risks associated with delivering outcomes under the Agreement, such as through maintaining a risk management plan.

PART 4: REFORMS

24. As part of the Agreement, the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth agree to work collaboratively to implement reforms outlined in the Additional terms in the Agreement.
25. The actions that the State of Queensland will undertake to meet these commitments are detailed in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Planned Actions for the period 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022 for the State of Queensland

Reform Element	Actions	Timing
<p>Reform Element One: Implement Commonwealth Funding Follows Child</p> <p>Steps to ready the state to ensure Commonwealth Funding Follows Child can be implemented in 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QKFS satisfies Commonwealth Funding Follows Child requirements. 	<p>From 2022</p>
<p>Reform Element Two: Implement a new national preschool attendance measure</p> <p>Work to ready the State to measure preschool attendance in 2024 and provide baseline data to the Commonwealth in 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the Commonwealth on development of the new national approach to kindergarten data collection and improvements to data quality for Ministerial consideration. • Facilitate sector preparedness for commencement of agreed data collection and reporting reforms. • Commence development of departmental systems enhancements to enable a smooth transition to agreed data collection and reporting reforms. 	<p>From 2022</p>
<p>Strategies to facilitate preschool attendance by children in the YBFS. For strategies relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, consistent with the Closing the Gap agreement, engage those communities and/or representative bodies in the design process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue funding the IUH to increase access to early childhood development and improve the effectiveness of the early childhood development system particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. • Continue investment in the <i>A great start to kindergarten pilot program</i> to increase the enrolment and participation of children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage by supporting their transition into an approved kindergarten program. • Continue communication campaigns 'Kindy counts for a lifetime' and 'Let's yarn about kindy' to encourage Queensland families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, to enrol their kindergarten-aged children in a Queensland Government approved kindergarten program. • The co-design of the campaigns represents views and images of real kindy parents/carers and children to help create a stronger connection within the community. The campaigns form an important component of Queensland's strategy to achieve universal access to kindergarten and meet the early childhood Closing the Gap targets. 	<p>From 2022</p>
<p>Reform Element Three: Implement a new national Preschool Outcomes Measure from 2025</p> <p>Plans for how the State will work with the Commonwealth to develop the preschool outcomes measure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the Commonwealth on the development of the Outcomes measure. 	<p>Throughout 2022</p>

<p>Reform Delivery/Implementation</p> <p>State-specific data and implementation issues and strategies for how these will be overcome in the context of assessing performance under the Agreement.</p>	<p>From 2022</p> <p><u>Issue 1:</u> Child Care Subsidy (CCS) data sharing arrangements are yet to be agreed. <u>Strategy:</u> Continue to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to secure access to child-level CCS data in 2022. This is required to set targets and has implications for the design of data collection systems occurring now in preparation for the 2023 data capture.</p> <p><u>Issue 2:</u> Timely resolution of performance measure definitions and collection specifications is required to progress baseline reporting in 2023. Without early resolution, there is a genuine risk that baseline data for all sectors will not be feasible in 2023. <u>Strategy:</u> Work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to resolve performance measure definitions and scope as early as practical.</p> <p><u>Issue 3:</u> National data issues regarding identification of children that undertake two years of preschool remain unresolved, noting counting rules under the new Year Before School methodology (once developed and agreed) will have funding and performance implications for Queensland. <u>Strategy:</u> Work collaboratively with the Commonwealth to resolve issues and continue to provide information collected in its annual Census on children that enrol in kindergarten for two years.</p>
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PART 5: PERFORMANCE AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS


26. The PRA together with Part 5 of the plan set out performance and reporting arrangements for 2022.
27. Commonwealth and State based collections or data sources and methodologies, agreed by both the Parties to this Plan, to measure progress against the performance milestones and benchmarks and targets in the Agreement, are set out in Part 5 of this Plan and Appendix B of the Agreement.
28. These data and performance specifications will be used to report State of Queensland performance, except for the supplementary data agreed by the Parties to this Plan.
29. Supplementary data reports must contain the following details for each Performance Indicator (PI) where the method is not consistent with the Early Childhood Education and Care Minimal Data Set (NMDS):
 - a. PI calculation description (numerator, denominator, computation and presentation)
 - b. numerator information (collection name and population description)
 - c. denominator information (collection name and population description)
 - d. calculation notes (including any information about how the PI is calculated)
 - e. methodology
 - f. rationale for supplementary data and reporting (including any additional information to explain how and why the specifications for the supplementary data differ from the specifications in the NMDS).

Performance requirements, reporting and payment summary 2022

30. Performance Reporting for 2022 will capture progress against planned actions undertaken by the State of Queensland as detailed at Table 4.
31. Performance results and reporting will be signed off by the Commonwealth Minister who will then inform the State of Queensland Minister of the outcome through an exchange of letters.

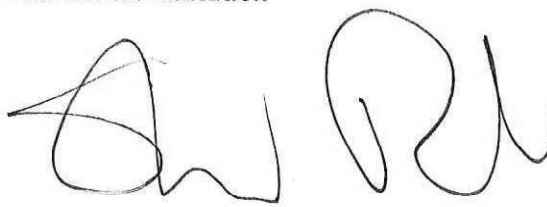
Sign off

32. The Parties have confirmed their commitment to this agreement as follows:

Signature  Date 18/03/2022

The Honourable Grace MP

Minister for Education



Date 23/3/22

Signature _____ Date _____

The Hon Stuart Robert MP

A/g Minister for Education and Youth