



Anna Bligh MP



Queensland
Government

15 OCT 2003

Minister for Education

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie *Neil,*

Thank you for your letter received on 25 August 2003 enclosing a petition, tabled paper numbers 5652 and 5654, lodged by Ms Melanie Richards and received by the House on 19 August 2003. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

I am pleased to advise that the Government, the Queensland Teachers' Union and the Queensland Public Sector Union have recently reached an historic agreement that will be voted on by teachers in the near future.

Amongst other wage and non-wage benefits, the agreement proposes a range of benefits to teachers and to our state school system and follows the release of the *Middle Phase of Learning State School Action Plan*. The proposed agreement heralds a new era in Queensland State education with the reduction of class size targets in Years 4-10 from 30 to 28 by 2007. This will be the first reduction in class size targets in more than two decades and will mean Queensland has the lowest class size targets in Years 4-10 in the country.

Underpinning this initiative is the Government's commitment to employ approximately 300 additional teachers and 184 teacher aides at an annual cost of around \$38m. This is over and above the 800 teachers being employed as part of the Government's 2001 election commitment, which in itself was the largest single initiative to provide additional classroom teaching positions to schools and until now, the only initiative with a focus on reducing class sizes since 1980.

It is my belief that the agreement reached with the unions on the issue of class size targets will effectively address the concerns expressed by the petitioners referred to in your correspondence.

I invite you to contact Mr Paul Leitch, Director, Strategic Human Resources on telephone (07) 3404 3966, should you wish to obtain further details in relation to this matter.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

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Minister for Education

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