



**THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FULL TIME PREPARATORY YEAR IN ALL
QUEENSLAND STATE SCHOOLS IN 2007
(GENERAL INFORMATION)**

Currently Tewantin State School is one of 66 schools across Queensland engaged in the trial of the Preparatory Year of Schooling (Prep).

The Queensland Government has indicated that the Prep Year will be made universally available to all children of appropriate age from 2007 onwards. The following information from the Minister of Education may help parents gain a better understanding of the Prep Year and how it will affect them.

CHANGES TO EARLY EDUCATION IN QUEENSLAND:

Young Queenslanders will be given a head start to formal schooling with the introduction of two important changes to early childhood education.

A full time year of education before Year 1 will be introduced in 2007, followed by an increase in the compulsory school starting age in 2008, to ensure all Queensland children are fully prepared for school.

Not only do these changes bring Queensland into line with other states, research shows that early childhood education leads to long term improvements in achievement in school and greater learning capacity.

A Prep Year provides many benefits for children, including better social skills, greater interest in learning, better problem solving skills, understanding and responding to routines, coping with the length of a school day and readiness for Year 1. It also offers parents the choice of a full time education program before Year 1.

Where will the preparatory year be available and will there be waiting lists for enrolment?

From 2007, non-compulsory, full time preparatory year will be offered in all state primary schools. It will replace the current part time preschool system that is not available at all schools. Therefore, there will be no need for waiting lists for enrolment in the preparatory year in state schools.

When can children enrol in the preparatory year and Year 1?

To be eligible to enrol in the preparatory year, children must be five by 30 June in the year they begin Prep.

The changes to the compulsory school starting age mean that from 2008, all children enrolling in Year 1 must be six by 30 June in that year. At present, children can start Year 1 if they turn six by 31 December in that year.

<i>Birth Date:</i>	<i>Eligible to enrol in Prep Year in</i>	<i>Eligible to enrol in Year 1 in:</i>
<i>Child born 1 January, 2002 – 30 June 2002</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>
<i>Child born 1 July, 2002 – 30 June, 2003</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>
<i>Child born 1 July, 2003 – 30 June, 2004</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>
<i>Child born 1 July, 2004 – 30 June, 2005</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>

What resources are allocated to the new preparatory year?

The Government has provided \$395 million for refurbishing existing classrooms and building new classrooms, where needed, in state and non-state schools so all Queensland schools are ready for the new Prep Year.

The current state pre-school program employs the equivalent of over 800 full time teachers. These teachers, as well as more than 100 new teachers, will teach Prep in 2007. All Prep Year teachers will be trained in the new curriculum.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS FOR PARENTS TO NOTE:

- 1. Our current Prep class is part of a three year trial which is due to conclude at the end of 2005. Because we are a trial school we have been given permission to operate one Prep class in 2006 leading up to full availability for all age appropriate children in 2007.

Enrolment in the 2006 Prep class of 25 children will be on the basis of Waiting List order as are the current Prep Class enrolments.

- 2. The year 2007 will be a critical year for parents of children born in 2002.

- (a) If your child was born in the first half of 2002 (1 January – 30 June), he/she will be eligible for the Prep year in 2007. There will be no waiting list for 2007 **all** age appropriate children will be enrolled in Prep. There will be no cut off enrolment number as applies to the current Preschool system.

- (b) If your child is born in the second half of 2002 (1 July – 31 December), he/she will not be eligible for Prep until 2008.

Also if your child is in this category, you must realize that in 2007 Preschool will not be available because of the switch to the Prep Year. Given this information, you may wish to look into Child Care/Kindergarten arrangements for 2007 at your earliest convenience.

- 3. We have been advised that for all but the most exceptional circumstances, children who attend Preschool in 2006 will go into Year 1 in 2007. They will not be eligible for Prep in 2007.

We have applied this Departmental policy to our 2006 Prep Trial class also. Children who attend PreSchool in 2005 will go into Year 1 in 2006. They will not be eligible for Prep in 2006.

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This information may not be relevant to you if your children are beyond Preschool/Prep age but I ask that you pass it on to any parents you may know who have younger children.

I am most willing to sit down and discuss the introduction of Prep with any parents (or prospective parents) who have any questions or concerns.

Regards,

Bob Grover
(Principal)

October, 2005