

# Senate Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – Inquiry into the *Australian Education Bill 2012*

**Public Hearing, Friday 1 March 2013**

## DEEWR Questions on Notice

The following questions were provided in writing from Senator McKenzie (4 March 2013).	Answer
1. <b>Question:</b> Can you update the committee on the metrics being considered for determining loadings in clause 9 (c)	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about loadings; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.
2. <b>Question:</b> Has the question of which measurement to use been decided?	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about loadings; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.
3. <b>Question:</b> If so which tool will be used for each of the circumstances listed in 9 (c) [specific Clause in the Bill]	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about loadings; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.
4. <b>Question:</b> Please list the aspects of the Bill that you have sought legal advice on, the date on which you sought this advice and the date it was received?	<b>Answer:</b> The Department has sought and continues to seek legal advice from the Australian Government Solicitor as well as in house government lawyers on an ongoing basis in relation to the Bill, including in relation to funding arrangements and direct funding relationships with non-government schools. It would be otherwise inappropriate to disclose the subject matter or content of the legal advice, as such disclosure may interfere with the ability of government to freely deliberate on policy options, and may prejudice current negotiations with stakeholders.
5. <b>Question:</b> In reference to funding arrangements with non-government schools have you sought legal advice? When was it sought and has it been received? What was the advice?	<b>Answer:</b> The Department has sought and continues to seek legal advice from the Australian Government Solicitor as well as in house government lawyers on an ongoing basis in relation to the Bill, including in relation to funding arrangements and direct funding relationships with non-government schools. It would be otherwise inappropriate to disclose the subject matter or content of the legal advice, as such disclosure may interfere with the ability of government to freely deliberate on policy options, and may prejudice

	current negotiations with stakeholders.
6. <b>Question:</b> With respect to schools the Commonwealth has a direct funding relationship with, have you sought legal advice on how those arrangements would exist under the Bill? What was that advice?	<b>Answer:</b> The Department has sought and continues to seek legal advice from the Australian Government Solicitor as well as in house government lawyers on an ongoing basis in relation to the Bill, including in relation to funding arrangements and direct funding relationships with non-government schools. It would be otherwise inappropriate to disclose the subject matter or content of the legal advice, as such disclosure may interfere with the ability of government to freely deliberate on policy options, and may prejudice current negotiations with stakeholders.
7. <b>Question:</b> What will be the estimated cost of data collection to support 8(a)	<b>Answer:</b> Agreement on the specifics of the scope of data to be collected and the agency to be responsible for data collection form part of the negotiations with states and sectors. On this basis, the Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. Once details are finalised we will have a clearer indication of the costs and the framework requirements for performance and reform monitoring.
8. <b>Question:</b> Part 2, 7 (5) could you provide more detail on how this will be measured? Cost impact? How will this interact with the AITSL?	<b>Answer:</b> Agreement on the specifics of the scope of data to be collected and the agency to be responsible for data collection form part of the negotiations with states and sectors. On this basis, the Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. Once details are finalised we will have a clearer indication of the costs and the framework requirements for performance and reform monitoring.
9. <b>Question:</b> The list of announced potential inclusions in the National Plan for School Improvement have been numerous, how confident is DEEWR that the resources exist within the sector to deliver?	<b>Answer:</b> School improvement is an important national reform. States and Territories which sign up to a COAG agreement will, in doing so, commit to providing the resources necessary to fully implement the agreed reforms.  Similarly non-government education authorities in formally agreeing to the National Plan for School Improvement will, in doing so, commit to providing the resources necessary to fully implement the agreed reforms.
10. <b>Question:</b> In particular, the number of teachers registered who can teach one of the 4 Asian languages identified by the PM in October, how many are there? How will regional schools deliver on this outcome?	<b>Answer:</b> According to the 2010 Staff in Australia's Schools (SiAS) survey, there were an estimated 9,500 teachers teaching Languages Other Than English, of which approximately 2,800 were primary teachers and 6,700 were secondary teachers. An estimated 12,800 secondary teachers (or 10.5 per cent of secondary teachers) and 15,000 primary teachers (or 12.1 per cent of primary teachers) had completed at least one semester of tertiary study in Languages Other Than English.  We cannot confirm the number of teachers currently teaching in the four priority Asian languages outlined in the Australia in the Asian Century White Paper (Chinese (Mandarin), Japanese, Indonesian and

	<p>Hindi). The 2013 SiAS survey is expected to provide a more accurate indication of teacher numbers.</p> <p>The number of additional teachers required to provide continuous access to a priority Asian language will depend on how states and territories decide to implement White Paper Objectives and their current readiness.</p> <p>Under the proposed National Plan for School Improvement, States and Territories that sign up to a COAG agreement will be undertaking to provide the resources necessary to fully implement the agreed reforms.</p>
<p>11. <b>Question:</b> Please outline a response to the comments from the disability sector regarding the use of academic performance indicators as a measure of success.</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> TBA</p>
<p>12. <b>Question:</b> When would the last school come off any transition arrangements and be funded at the proposed Nationals School Resourcing Standard?</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about transition and indexation arrangements; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.</p>
<p>13. <b>Question:</b> According to the model how long will it take for Gonski to be fully implemented?</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about transition arrangements; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.</p> <p>However, the Prime Minister stated in her address to the National Press Club in September 2012 that the Australian Government has identified an implementation period of six years from 2014.</p>
<p>14. <b>Question:</b> In what year will no school be funded with over or under the resourcing standard?</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about transition and indexation arrangements; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.</p>
<p>15. <b>Question:</b> Can you clarify that growth is guaranteed in dollar terms only, not in real terms? (Chair's discussion with Independent schools)</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Australian Government has undertaken to ensure that no school will lose a dollar as a result of these reforms and that funding will continue to grow each year.</p> <p>Confidential discussions on the design of indexation arrangements are still in progress and cannot be made public at this stage.</p>
<p>16. <b>Question:</b> For each of the 16 models under consideration, are there any which disadvantage</p>	<p><b>Answer:</b> The Australian Government has undertaken to ensure that no school will lose a dollar as a result of these reforms and that funding will continue to grow each year. This includes schools in</p>

regional students?	regional Australia.
17. <b>Question:</b> Hansard states that the department is analyzing the Victorian response to the Gonski review, what is the outcome of that analysis?	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and its analysis includes reviewing existing programs and operational arrangements in the states, territories, non-government sector as well as considering international experience.
18. <b>Question:</b> What will be the contribution of each State to the funding model in proportion to the Commonwealth?	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about the relative funding shares; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.
19. <b>Question:</b> Will there be consideration given to the unique approach of each State? If so how? For those States who have already undergone significant reforms will this be recognized in any funding arrangement?	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about implementation arrangements; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.
<b>The following questions were taken on notice during the hearing.</b>	<b>Answer</b>
20. <b>Question (Chair):</b> You were probably in the room when the disability groups actually raised significant concerns with the way that a portable voucher type system for disability payment maybe used. Maybe not now, but I think the committee would appreciate a considered response from the department to those concerns (page 49).	<b>Answer:</b> In addition to the initial response provided by Mr Cook at the hearing, the following is provided in response.  The Review of Funding for schooling recommended a new funding model which has a benchmark funding amount for every student, called a Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and that there should be 'loadings' for those students who need extra support, including students with disability. These loadings are focused on student needs no matter where they live, the school they attend or their family background and would be fully publicly funded. The Review recognised that systems are often best placed to allocate resources in ways that are responsive to the specific needs of schools and their communities, while achieving various efficiencies through economies of scale.
21. <b>Question (McKenzie):</b> If states or sectors are above the school resource standard – as per student benchmark amounts – will that funding be directed into the national pool and then redistributed?	<b>Answer:</b> The Government is considering a range of options for a new funding and school improvement system and is discussing these options with stakeholders. This includes discussions about transition arrangements for schools; however these deliberations are confidential and cannot be made public at this stage.