



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

Associate Secretary  
Robert Griew

Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Economics  
PO Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

I refer to the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations' appearance at the House of Representatives Economics Committee Inquiry hearing into raising the level of productivity growth in the Australian economy on 30 October 2009.

Please find attached:

- proposed corrections to the proof transcript of evidence, and
- responses to two Questions on Notice.

I thank the Committee for providing the department with the opportunity to speak at the hearing.

Should you require any further information, please contact Sue Dawson, Group Manager, Strategic Policy Group on 02 6240 3777.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Griew'.

Robert Griew

30 November 2009



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HEARING FOR THE *INQUIRY INTO RAISING THE LEVEL OF  
PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY*

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Computers in schools and productivity  
Hansard page number ECO9

**Mr BRIGGS**—*On the education aspect of your department: there were several programs mentioned in your comprehensive statement at the beginning. In particular, I am interested in what research you have looked at in relation to a couple of programs in your department and their impact on productivity. The first one is the laptops in schools program. What does the evidence say about how that is helping the education outcomes and, hopefully, our productivity? Has it been researched? Are you doing research?*

**Answer**

Australian Government policy about the role of information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching and learning is in line with that of comparable countries. DEEWR has made use of national and international research to further inform implementation of these policies.

BECTA (previously known as the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency - [www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk)) has an established body of research on the effective and innovative use of technology in schools, to which we have had regard.

BECTA stresses that although there is a strong body of evidence linking the use of technology to improvements in learning outcomes, although it is noted that the relationship is not a simple, causal one.

The conclusions that can be drawn about the impact of ICT on attainment, motivation and learning from this research that overall, the weight of evidence presented in research suggests that ICT provision, and pupil ICT use, impact positively on pupil attainment and on school standards.

Recent research commissioned by DEEWR relating to views of students and early career educators had about learning with technologies in Australian education and training found that over 70% of all cohorts indicated they benefit from using technologies in their studies. The literature review that informed this research concluded that students value and enjoy using technologies on a regular basis to build research skills, gain motivation to learn, and to connect with real life experiences.

The EDNA website (<http://www.edna.edu.au>) contains a comprehensive collection of research, policies and resources related to ICT in education, including a collection of links to key Australian and international research on ICT and its use and impact in education.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HEARING FOR THE *INQUIRY INTO RAISING THE LEVEL OF PRODUCTIVITY GROWTH IN THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY***

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Analysis of Building Industry Productivity  
Hansard from page ECO12

**Mr BRIGGS**—*The last issue I want to deal with is something I know you had a bit to do with in the past: the building industry and the impact of the recent changes in the specific industry legislation and also the ABCC. We have the Master Builders before us later today. I am interested to know whether there has been any analysis done in the department about the increases in the productive performance of that sector since the beginning of this decade.*

**Ms Parker**—*I would need to take that on notice. It is not an area that I work—*

**Mr BRIGGS**—*Let me put it another way. They have been outside companies, Access Economics or Econtech,—*

**Ms Parker**—*That is correct, yes, for the ABCC.*

**Mr BRIGGS**—*Which suggests that it has had an impact. I am interested in your department's view as to whether you would agree with that analysis.*

**Answer**

In 2003, the then Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) commissioned Econtech Pty Ltd to conduct the following analyses:

- a high level economic assessment of the effects of possible workplace relations reforms in the building and construction industry upon that industry and the Australian economy; and
- a detailed economic assessment of the effects of possible workplace relations reforms in the building and construction industry upon the efficiency of that industry.

In March 2003, Minister Abbott released the report entitled *An Economic Analysis of the Building and Construction Sector*, which was prepared by Econtech with support from Ernst and Young.

The Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner subsequently commissioned further Econtech reports in 2007 and 2008 and Master Builders Australia commissioned another report from KPMG Econtech in 2009.

The Department notes that all three reports have been the subject of a high degree of contention as to the veracity of their findings. The Department also notes that productivity is affected by a broad range of factors not limited to workplace relations. For example, productivity in this industry can be significantly affected by factors such as technological developments and the weather.