

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000698

Senator McKim, Nick asked on 21 October 2015, Proof Hansard page 119

Chaplains

Question

Senator McKIM: Was there a similar reporting framework last year?

Mr Burford: Last year was the commencement of the program. The requirement at the end of last year was for these participating states to tell us their selection methodology for the schools that Mr Cook just gave you the numbers for. They were required to set up cross-sector panels on which the state and the sectors would make decisions about which schools would participate in the program.

Senator McKIM: Did all states comply?

Mr Burford: They did.

Senator McKIM: Are those publicly available?

Mr Burford: We have been provided them under the national partnership. There is quite a range of information from them.

Mr Cook: We can take it on notice.

Mr Burford: We will take it on notice. But it is quite open in terms of their methodology. Some have chosen to actually publish on their own websites how they have gone about making those selection, as well. But there is a range—whether they have gone to do a bulk purchase of chaplains themselves, or given funds to schools to make those decisions themselves. So it is quite a mixed bag, but we should be able to provide that detail.

Senator McKIM: I will put that on notice and you can come back to us if there is an issue with that.

Answer

Under the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Programme, states and territories are responsible for delivering all aspects of the programme and are required to form a cross sector panel consisting of government, Catholic and independent school representatives to select and prioritise schools for funding in their jurisdiction.

The cross sector panel is responsible for making decisions about the process for the selection of participating schools, the appointment of service providers and the distribution of funds to participating schools. The Commonwealth has no role in determining the process for the selection of schools beyond what is stipulated in the project agreement.

While there were variances in each jurisdiction's approach to selecting schools to participate, all cross-sector panels considered the following in their decisions:

- a demonstrated need for chaplaincy services
- whether existing chaplaincy or wellbeing services/strategies were in place in schools
- evidence that the school community supported the introduction or continuation of a chaplaincy service within a school
- geographical spread.