

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 2: Indigenous  
**Topic:** Aboriginal Education

**Senator:** Dodson, Patrick

**Question reference number:** 191

**Type of question:** Written

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 13 April 2017

**Number of pages:** 3

**Question:**

In relation to written responses to Question number 186.

Re 186 1(b)

- Which are the specific peak organisations and education bodies you have consulted with?
- Do you consult with community groups, and if so, which ones?

Re 186 1 (c)

- What are the mechanisms used by the researchers/evaluators?
- Does PM&C also have any measures to identify how non-Indigenous teachers and principals are working to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students? If so, what precisely are these measures, and what has been the impact of these measures?

Re 186 2.

- In the states and territories where IECBs are not funded to run specific service delivery activities, is there another community-based organisation funded to deliver programs/services that contributes to improved education outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?

- Given that the work of IECBs directly benefits the implementation of the IAS, why was the Commonwealth funding for the operations of the IECBs cancelled (e.g. in Western Australia and the Northern Territory) when they are the key and recognised bodies (by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community) in each State and Territory that engage with, raise the concerns of, and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on educational issues with schooling and training sectors in each State and Territory?

Re 186 7.

- To what extent is there community involvement in the discussions on Indigenous education policy that PM&C conducts with state and territory education authorities?
- Can you provide some practical, concrete examples of such engagement?

**Answer:**

186 1(b)

- The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) regularly discusses Indigenous education policy with all state and territory education authorities and bodies representing catholic and independent schools. PM&C has met regularly with jurisdictions to discuss progress against the Closing the Gap targets, and specifically the development of school attendance and attainment bilateral plans. Through the Education Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group, the Commonwealth engages with working group members comprising senior officials with responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and/or early childhood policy from each jurisdiction; a senior official of the National Catholic Education Commission; a senior official of the Independent Schools Council of Australia; and two senior representatives of Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs).
- PM&C's Regional Network also meets with community groups on a range of issues including education matters. This engagement occurs across all of the Regional Network.

186 1 (c)

- PM&C assesses the effectiveness of Government education policies and programmes through a range of mechanisms including through the Department's Regional Network and through external research and evaluation projects. The research approaches used include a range of evaluation approaches, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative methods. The Department of Education and Training is responsible for assessing teacher standards including through the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

186 2

- Under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy Children and Schooling programme, PM&C funds a range of community-based organisations and Indigenous owned organisations to deliver programmes and services aimed at improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
- Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) funding is provided to organisations that deliver services to increase school attendance and improve education outcomes. Indigenous educational representative bodies are welcome to apply for service delivery activities at any time through the Community Led grants process. The Government considers state-based education authorities responsible for supporting the core functions of IECBs, as they are responsible for the management and delivery of school education and directly benefit from the work of IECBs.

- Through the Education Council's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Advisory Group, the Commonwealth Government engages with working group members comprising senior officials with responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and/or early childhood policy from each jurisdiction; a senior official of the National Catholic Education Commission; a senior official of the Independent Schools Council of Australia; and two senior representatives of Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs).
- PM&C works in partnership with Indigenous communities in its work on Indigenous education policy including through the many Indigenous community organisations that are funded through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy. A practical example of this engagement is the work PM&C is leading on an interdepartmental review into support arrangements for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who study away from home. Phase 1 of the review involved consultations with peak representative bodies, schools and other key stakeholders. It also involved following up on issues related to ABSTUDY as raised by regional network staff helping students and their families access ABSTUDY to study away from home. For example, as part of the consultations PMC spoke with the Remote Indigenous Parents Association from the Roper Gulf region of the NT, which includes membership from the Borroloola, Jilkminngan, Barunga, Bulman, Beswick, Ngukurr, Manyallaluk and Minyerri communities.