

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 068

Topic: National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator McKenzie asked:

The Australian Government has a National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability called Living Sustainably.

1. How much has it cost to implement this plan?
2. Considering the aim of the plan was to equip all Australians with the knowledge and skills required to live sustainably, how many people so far have received that knowledge through the plan? How is this assessed?
3. Has a network of “sustainability champions” been set up in departments and agencies to promote sustainability in government policy?
4. How much money has been given to fund the National Plan for Education for Sustainability?

Answer:

1. A number of specific funding grants relating to education for sustainability under the National Action Plan for Education for Sustainability (“NAP”) have been made.
 - a. Under the Education for Sustainability Grants program, grants totalling approximately \$380,000 have been made since the 2008-09 financial year.
 - b. Under the Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative (AuSSI), grants totalling approximately \$825,000 have been made to State and Territory jurisdictions since the 2008-09 financial year. Australian Government funding was typically matched with in-kind contributions from State and Territory partners.
2. The statement, “*all Australians have the awareness, knowledge, skills, values and motivation to live sustainably*”, was the vision statement for the National Action Plan. No assessment of the vision statement has been conducted. Actions under NAP continue to be supported by sustainability being a cross-cutting priority of the Australian Curriculum and the availability of the Sustainability Curriculum Framework (2010).
3. The Australian Government Agency Environmental Network is a network within Commonwealth Government agencies that provides a forum for sharing ideas about sustainability in government policy and communication of lessons learnt by individual agencies.

Additionally, all Commonwealth agencies, authorities and companies are required by section 516A of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* to include within their annual reports how their activities and outcomes accord with or contribute to the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

4. Please see the response to question 1, above.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 069

Topic: Shire of Melton sustainably designed business hub – cost and key performance indicators

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator McKenzie asked:

1. How much did it cost to build a sustainably-designed business hub for the Shire of Melton?
2. How have the KPIs for 2012-13 been modified to reflect departmental reorganisation of operational areas?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government is providing \$14.6 million in funding towards the establishment of the \$21.1 million Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence in Melton.

\$13.6 million of the government's contribution will be utilised for the construction of the sustainably-designed business hub.
2. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Suburban Jobs Program, as published in the Portfolio Budget Statements, were not modified as a result of the departmental reorganisation of operational areas. The KPIs will be updated to reflect the progress of the program as required.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 070

Topic: Suburban Jobs – carbon footprint of the Shire of Melton sustainably designed business hub

Proof Hansard Page and Date 123 and Written

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

**Senator McKenzie/
Cameron asked:**

Senator McKENZIE: Do we have an estimation of the carbon footprint of that project?

Mrs Wiley-Smith: No, I do not.

Senator McKENZIE: But we know it is sustainably designed.

Mrs Wiley-Smith: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator McKENZIE: I appreciate it.

CHAIR: Could you also give us on notice some estimate of the savings on carbon for people who would be employed there and not travelling long distances. Has that been looked at?

Mrs Wiley-Smith: I am sure that it probably has, so we will certainly take that on notice.

Answer:

An estimation of the carbon footprint of the Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence is not currently available.

It is anticipated that the carbon implications of Suburban Jobs projects, including the carbon savings associated with reduced travel for people employed at the three centres, will be considered as part of the development of the monitoring and evaluation strategies for each project.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 071

Topic: Suburban Jobs – funding for the Shire of Melton

Proof Hansard Page and Date 123

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator McKenzie asked:

Senator McKENZIE: Could you let me know how much of that component of funding is for the sustainably designed business hub?

Mrs Wiley-Smith: I can, but I will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

The Australian Government is providing \$14.6 million in funding towards the establishment of the \$21.1 million Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence in Melton.

\$13.6 million of the government's contribution will be utilised for the construction of the sustainably-designed business hub.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 072

Topic: Suburban Jobs – location of projects

Proof Hansard Page and Date 123

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator McKenzie asked:

Senator McKENZIE: I have a follow up on that, Chair. Are those three projects—the Western Sydney, the Penrith and the Blue Mountain Coalition—in Labor held or coalition seats?

Mrs Wiley-Smith: I do not know.

Senator McKENZIE: Please take that on notice.

Mrs Wiley-Smith: Certainly.

Answer:

The Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence is located in the electorate of Gorton.

The Werrington Park Corporate Centre is located in the electorate of Lindsay.

The Stretton Centre is located in the electorate of Wakefield.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 073

Topic: Affordable commercial space

Proof Hansard Page and Date 124

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: ...Apologies if you submitted this and I missed it, but I asked you about whether affordable commercial space was being looked at as being made a priority, particularly in areas where there are empty spaces as is the case in many even suburban town centres and high streets, such as shop top spaces that are empty. I did not see any sign of an answer. Can you check whether that was provided and if not please provide an answer. It seems to me that at a relatively low cost we could bring a lot of commercial space in suburban areas into use. I am perplexed as to the reasons why that is not happening. I was in Sydney at the weekend and all through the inner city space is vacant at the same time as we have a housing affordability crisis and a lot of businesses that cannot get into these areas.

Mrs Wiley-Smith: We can certainly check on that.

Answer:

Affordable commercial office space is not currently the responsibility of this portfolio; however the Suburban Jobs program is addressing the lack of available commercial space in two suburban locations.

The Western Business Accelerator and Centre for Excellence in Melton and the Werrington Park Corporate Centre in Penrith will include commercial office space.

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Program: Division or Agency: 2.2: SPAD **Question No:** 074

Topic: Sustainability indicators

Proof Hansard Page and Date 124

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Ludlam asked:

Senator LUDLAM: ...I am now going to fire a whole lot of questions which you will probably need to take on notice. You would be aware I generally ask about indicators, consultation data sources to underpin the headline indicators. Mr Sullivan, is that still your domain?

Mr Sullivan: Temporarily it is.

Senator LUDLAM: Please provide us on notice, in terms of funding, what is left in the bucket and what kinds of resources the indicators will measure and provide us with an update on what is happening there. One of the largest threats to biodiversity is obviously land clearing. Please tell us how you think land clearing, both in urban and regional areas, will be included in your indicators and whether they will tell us, for example, what we have left and what needs to be protected, particularly in urban areas where we are down to the last little bits and pieces of urban diversity. How will you be working with the states and territories on these indicators? Even though we have spoken on this at some length in various sessions, I am still—

CHAIR: Senator Ludlam, I think you can put the others on notice.

Answer:

As at 9 November 2012, \$7.4 million remains in the Measuring Sustainability Program.

The sustainability indicators have been agreed by the Australian Government and announced, together with the establishment of an independent National Sustainability Council.

Further information on sustainability indicators and the Council is available at:
<http://www.environment.gov.au/sustainability/measuring/index.html>.

Land clearing is being taken into account through several related indicators, 'Extent of Native Vegetation' 'Ground Cover' and 'Land Use'.

State and Territory officials were consulted during the development of the indicator set. Decision makers at all levels of government are considered a key audience of the public report to be produced by the National Sustainability Council.