

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: DIISRTE – Implementation of recommendations in the Chief Scientist’s *Mathematics, Engineering & Science in the National Interest* report

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Mason

QUESTION No.: AI-75

In May 2012, the government, in its Budget announcement, committed to provide \$54 million as part of its response to the Chief Scientist’s *Mathematics, Engineering & Science in the National Interest* report (**Report**): see Chris Evans and Peter Garrett, ‘Budget 2012-13 – Investing in Science and Maths for a Smarter Future’, Joint Media Release, 8 May 2012.

Please confirm whether the following recommendations of the Chief Scientist from the *Mathematics, Engineering & Science in the National Interest* report (**Report**) will be implemented and, if so, the progress that has been made to date:

- a) Requiring established teachers without formal qualifications to be accredited against the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) standard of “Professional Knowledge” in order to continue to teach maths, engineering and science subjects (recommendation 2 of the Report).
- b) Implementing the higher education initiatives to increase maths, engineering and science teacher graduates mentioned in recommendations 3-4 and Appendix B of the Report, namely the Flagship Program in Mathematics, Science and Education and up-front financial support in the form of cadetships and bursaries.
- c) Cooperation between the Commonwealth government and the states and territories to ensure more focused and better quality professional development for maths, engineering and science teachers and equitable access to opportunities (recommendation 6 of the Report).
- d) Removing financial barriers that may inhibit teachers from renewing their qualifications or attending professional development (recommendation 9 of the Report).
- e) Negotiating with universities to ensure that structured development programs for teachers lead to credit towards a qualification and that any credits are transportable between universities (recommendation 10 of the Report).
- f) Develop programs to encourage more women into maths, science and engineering courses (recommendation 17 of the Report).

ANSWER

- a) While the registration of teachers is a matter for state and territory teacher registration authorities, a nationally consistently process for the registration of teachers against the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers is being implemented. This will require all teachers to demonstrate that they meet all standards across the three domains of teaching: professional knowledge, professional practice and professional engagement.
- b) The proposals for a Flagship Program in Mathematics, Science and Education and related up-front financial incentives were based on a recommendation from the Higher Education Base Funding Review. As noted in the Government's response to the Base Funding Review, it does not support this recommendation, noting that it would unnecessarily complicate the funding of student places and the administrative complexity and contention around who decides what is a high quality course. For the same reasons, the Government does not intend to implement the recommendations included in the Chief Scientist's Report. However, the Enhancing the Training of Mathematics and Science Teachers encourages proposals for collaborative arrangements between eligible institutions and state or territory education departments, or other education authorities, or both, where the financial cost is shared between the partners.
- c) While the professional development of teachers is the responsibility of state and territory government and non-government education authorities, AITSL in consultation with states and territories, has developed the Australian Charter for the Professional Learning of Teachers and School Leaders. The Charter can be used as a guide to identify relevant, collaborative and future-focused professional learning.
- d) Supporting teachers to undertake professional development in order to meet the requirement of registration is a matter for employers such as state and territory government and non-government education authorities.
- e) As autonomous, self-accrediting institutions, universities are best placed to make decisions about the content of courses, whether structured development programs lead to credit towards a qualification and any issues concerning transfers between courses and other universities.
- f) In evaluating Australian Maths and Science Partnerships Program proposals, the Department's assessment criteria takes account of the degree to which a project improves outcomes for disadvantaged groups, including women in non-traditional fields of study.