

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1  
**Output Group:** 1.1– Funding for schools

#### DEST Question No. E816\_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

*Refers to DEST Question Nos E839\_04 and E840\_04*

#### Question:

##### **Christian College, Geelong**

*Status of Christian College Institute of Senior Education*

(a) In 2001 the Commonwealth allocated an establishment Grant to the school Christian College Institute of Senior Education. Can DEST confirm that? How much did the school receive?

(b) Is this the school referred to in a speech by the Minister, Dr Nelson, in the Chamber on 11 March 2002, where he says:

*“I thank the member for Corangamite for his question and, indeed, for his strong advocacy not only on behalf of Corangamite but also on behalf of the Christian College Institute of Senior Education in his electorate.”*

(c) This school received publicity over its grant when it was pointed out that the school was very closely linked – via location, company records and administration – to another school, Christian College Highton. Can DEST confirm that links between these schools were established during the Senate Inquiry into the *Education and Innovation Bill 2001*?

(d) Christian College, Geelong is the new name of Christian College, Highton. Can DEST confirm that?

(e) As part of DEST’s review of the Establishment Grants program, did Departmental officers try to find a website for Christian College Institute of Senior Education (CCISE) – the “new school” that got an Establishment Grant in 2000?

(f) Did they examine the website of Christian College Geelong?

(g) Did they find that the CCISE in fact has no website?

(h) Did they find, however, that it is listed on various Government listings as having the official address “Pigdon’s Rd, Waurm Ponds”?

(i) Did DEST officers find that this address was identical to the address and map location given by the website of Christian College Geelong for its own Senior Campus?

(j) Did they further find that the entity known on the website as “Christian College Senior Campus” is presented as an integral part of a three-campus school – one which also has a junior and middle school campus?

(k) Did they also find that events, happenings, staff and students of the three campuses are referred to on all parts of this website as part of a school known as “Christian College Geelong”?

(l) Isn’t it the case that a new campus of an existing school is NOT eligible for an Establishment Grant?

(m) Despite its separate registration, isn’t it the case that this school is really a new campus of an existing school?

If not, why not?

(n) Has the Department investigated the possibility that the school now known as Christian College Geelong might have sought deliberately to attract an establishment Grant by registering its new senior campus as a separate school?

(o) What was the outcome of any such investigation? If DEST found CCISE to be a

genuinely separate school, on what grounds – other than its formal registration – did the department do so?

(p) Among the recommendations of the department's review into this program, what was proposed regarding the recognition of new campuses as new schools? Was a tightening up proposed? Exactly how will DEST scrutinise applications in future, to ensure that apparently new schools are not in fact simply new campuses?

(q) Would the fact that an apparently new school:

- Had a large enrolment apparently transferred from another school;
- Was very close in location to an apparently related school;
- Did not have its own website, but was presented on the website of another school as a campus of that school;
- Had the same Principal as another allegedly separate school;
- Had virtually identical office bearers and company officers as an allegedly separate school;
- Had the same fee structure, application form and admission procedures – including the same contact details – as an allegedly separate school;
- Presented its sporting results, information about coming events etc in the same format and in the same documents as an allegedly separate school;
- Shared the same newsletter with an allegedly separate school;

lead DEST to believe that the allegedly new school was in fact a new campus of an existing school?

(r) What procedures does DEST have, and what procedures does the department intend to have, in place to recoup funds allocated in error under this program?

(s) What measures will the department take to retrieve the Establishment Grant funds mistakenly allocated to CCISE?

## **Answer:**

### *Status of Christian College Institute of Senior Education*

(a) The Christian College Institute of Senior Education received funding totalling \$164,500 under the Establishment Grants Programme for 2001.

(b) Yes.

(c) An application from Christian College Institute of Senior Education for Australian Government General Recurrent was received in the Department on 17 February 2000. The school's relationships with other existing schools such as Christian College Highton were investigated by DEST at that time. The *Education and Innovation Bill 2001* was introduced in Parliament on 5 April 2001.

(d) The school has not requested recognition by DEST of a change of name and nor has it approached the Victorian Registered Schools Board.

(e) The report of the Evaluation of the Establishment Grants Programme, December 2003 states that the evaluation methodology included a review of background written material, including administrative files; an analysis of administrative data such as applications submitted by schools; consultations with an external Reference Group and with stakeholders (including face to face interviews and a written survey).

(f) No.

(g) There was no website search undertaken.

(h) Christian College Institute of Senior Education has an approved location of 135 Pigdon's Road, Highton.

(i) The website at <http://www.christiancollege.vic.edu.au> contains information about 3 associated schools, one of which is Christian College Institute of Senior Education.

(j) See above.

(k) See above

(l) New campuses of existing schools are not eligible for establishment grants.

(m) The Christian College Institute of Senior Education application for general recurrent grant funding was accepted as a new school application after consideration of a number of factors and on the balance of the evidence available at the time.

The State registration authority recognised the College as a new school rather than as a campus of an existing school. Among the evidence considered was that the College had a legally separate corporate structure, separate management and separate financial structures.

(n) The application from the Christian College Institute of Senior Education for Australian Government funding was received by the Department on 17 February 2000. The application pre dated any Government announcement about the availability of Establishment Grants in the 2001 to 2004 quadrennium.

(o) See above.

(p) The following is an extract from the Executive Summary of the report *Evaluation of the Establishment Grants Programme, December 2003*

"The evaluation highlighted four important indicators for consideration in assessing whether a new school is eligible for Establishment Grant funding. They are not new as most of them have already been employed by DEST in determining the nature of funding application but have been streamlined . These are:

- 1) *State/Territory registration* – must have State or Territory registration or recognition as a separate new school;
- 2) *Location* – the new school has not been physically in existence before and where there may have been an existing school, the new school must not be located on the same site or a site near the existing school but at a distant location where there is no sharing of resources;
- 3) *Student cohort and catchment area* – must have a new cohort of students and different catchment area from the existing school; and
- 4) *School administration* – must be separate and autonomous, and have new teaching and financial administration, irrespective of the governance structure and educational philosophy.

Further if the approved authority of an existing primary or secondary school opens a secondary or primary school respectively and satisfies the above four conditions, that school should be considered a new school.

It is recommended that :

*In assessing whether a proposal is for a newly commencing school and therefore eligible for Establishment Grants, weight should be given to the four criteria (specified*

*above) relating to State/Territory registration, location, student cohort and catchment area, and school administration.”*

(q) See previous response above.

(r) Non-government schools do not apply for Establishment Grants. New schools which meet the relevant provisions in the legislation are eligible for the Grants.

(s) Christian College Institute of Senior Education was approved as a new school in 2000. It was eligible for Establishment Grants on the basis of this original approval.