

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.1

DEST Question No. E847_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Investing in Our Schools Program

The government has allocated \$1 billion of funding under this Program for the 2005-08 quadrennium. Single grants cannot exceed \$150,000. Last year school funding under the program was brought forward for spending ahead of original intentions. This redistributed around \$500 million by the end of 2006 and all funding from the program is committed for 2007. Accordingly there are no funds available for 2008.

1. What is the current funding profile of the Investing in Our Schools Program? Over the forward estimates?
2. Provide a list of all projects funded under the program, by electorate (or postcode if cannot provide by electorate) and commencement date.
3. What is the process for advising schools of their success or failure for their grant application under the program?
4. Which Government Members or Senators were advised of the grant applications in their relevant electorate or duty district?
5. Which Opposition, minor party or Independent Members or Senators were advised of the grant applications in their relevant electorate or duty district?
6. Was there a timing difference between when Government Members and Senators were notified compared with those of other Parties?
7. Opposition Members who received notification of the application status had correspondence addressed to their electorate offices but had the envelopes addressed to their parliament house offices, meaning there has been delays in Opposition Members and Senators being made aware of the outcomes.
 - a. Why did this occur?
 - b. Is this normal practice?
 - c. Why?
8. Is the Department aware of other problems associated with informing Members of Parliament of the applications made by schools in their electorates?
9. One Labor MP, member for Cowan, Graham Edwards, received a letter dated 8 February 2007 in his Parliament House office notifying him of successful applications made by schools in his electorate. That letter also contained a letter addressed to the Member for Brand, Kim Beazley.
 - a. Can the department advise why this occurred or was it simply human error?

10. Given that funding for the Investing in Our Schools Program was brought forward last year, can the Department advise why?
11. Have all funds under the program been committed?
12. In light of the fact that funding was brought forward, is the Investing in Our Schools Program to be extended?
13. What is the process to extend or renew the program?
14. How far advanced is that?
15. Has funding been determined for the replacement program?
16. What is the funding profile over the forward estimates?

Answer:

Investing in our schools program

1. The current profile of the Investing in Our Schools Programme (IOSP) over the forward estimates is given below:

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Government Schools	230,000	496,667	100,334	0	827,000
Non Government Schools	100,000	107,000	107,000	40,000	354,000
Total	330,000	603,667	207,334	40,000	1,181,000
					0

2. All successful school grant and project details for both government and non-government schools are published on the *Investing in Our Schools* web site. Details can be viewed and down loaded at www.investinginourschools.dest.gov.au
3. The Department dispatches letters to all successful and unsuccessful schools to advise them of the outcome of their project applications.
4. The Department prepared correspondence for all MPs and Government Senators to advise them of successful grant applications in their relevant electorates.
5. All Opposition, minor party and independent Members and Government Senators were advised of successful grant applications in their relevant electorates.
6. Please see the response to Questions 4 and 5.
- 7-8. Since the inception of IOSP, it has been the administrative arrangement that all correspondence for advising MPs and Government Senators of successful grant applications in their electorates is dispatched through the Parliamentary Secretary's Office either to their Parliament House office or electorate office.
8. No.
9. No. We are unable to advise why it occurred.
10. On 6 April 2006, an amendment to the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* received Royal Assent. The

amendment brought forward all funds for the government sector from 2008 to 2006. The number of applications received in the first two rounds of funding exceeded the amount of funding available. Bringing forward funding ensured that a large number of worthy applications were not rejected.

11. No.
12. 19 February 2007 the Prime Minister announced a further \$181 million funding for the Investing in Our Schools Programme. Please see http://www.pm.gov.au/media/Release/2007/Media_Release23908.cfm
13. Please see the response to Question 12.
14. An amendment to the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* was introduced in Parliament on 28 February 2007.
15. Please see the response to Question 12.
16. Please see the response to Question 1.