

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome:

Output Group:

DEST Question No. E987_07

Senator Nettle asked on 14 February 2007, EWRE Hansard page 134.

Question:

Brethren Schools

Senator NETTLE— If you are able to provide to the committee any more detail about the process by which that occurred—in particular, a copy of any correspondence and requests from the Brethren and the minister's exemption as well—that would be good.

Mr McDonald—We will take that on notice.

Answer:

Brethren Schools

On 21 July 2004 the then Minister for Education, Science and Training, The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, met with a group of representatives of Brethren schools at their request.

Dr Nelson wrote to Mr David Stewart, principal of MET School, Meadowbank, NSW, on 12 August 2004 confirming that Brethren schools would not be required to participate in national sample assessments in ICT being carried out during the current quadrennium 2005-08. This would not extend to the national sample assessments in science and civics and citizenship education.

Attached are copies of Mr Stewart's letter of 21 April 2004 seeking an interview with Dr Nelson, and Dr Nelson's letter of 12 August 2004.

6 JUL 2004 3:54

THE HON BRENDAN NELSON

NO 3165 P. 13/19



MEADOWBANK EDUCATION INC.

22 APR 2004

ABN 67 612 204 508
109 Bowden Street
Meadowbank, NSW 2114
Telephone: (02) 9209 6604

All Correspondence to:
P.O. Box 7151
Meadowbank NSW 2114

The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP
8/12-16 Tryon Road
LINDFIELD NSW 2070

21st April 2004



Dear Dr. Nelson,

I am prompted to write to you by receiving information regarding your National Framework for Values Education. As a school we are certainly interested in increasing the quality of our delivery to the students.

Meadowbank Education Inc. is the administrative body for M.E.T. School. M.E.T. School is somewhat unique. It is run on behalf of Brethren and has fourteen Registered and Accredited campuses spread throughout NSW. Currently the school caters for years 7 to 12 with an enrollment in 2004 of some six hundred students. There are similarly organised schools in each state.

M.E. Inc. receives Federal and State funding and is governed by the NSW Board of Studies requirements. Because of Brethren's conscience the increasing use of technology in education is presenting a difficulty. There have been a series of consultations between the B.o.S. and M.E. Inc. which have gone a long way to resolving these difficulties.

We have sought an appointment with you through the Hon Alan Cadman on behalf of all Brethren schools Australia wide to acquaint you with our position and seek your discretion for exemption from certain IT conditions. We are happy to meet you wherever is convenient to your self.

Enclosed is the school Ethos, "Profile of the Brethren" and "Brethren's Attitude to Computing" to give you an indication of our background.

Thank you in anticipation of your granting us the requested interview. Reply can be made to the above address or the writers personal office at:-

PO BOX 104
KELLYVILLE NSW 2155
Phone: 9629-5422
Fax: 9629-3102

Yours faithfully,
Meadowbank Education Incorporated

David W. Stewart
Principal

cc. faxed to
Parliament House
Canberra



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING
THE HON DR BRENDAN NELSON MP

12 AUG 2004

Mr David W Stewart
Principal
MET School
PO Box 1151
MEADOWBANK NSW 2114

Dear Mr Stewart

I refer to our meeting on 21 July 2004 at which you requested formal confirmation that Brethren schools will not be included in the national sample assessment in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills and Brethren schools do not need to provide data online for general recurrent purposes to my Department.

I can confirm that, for the purposes of the reporting and accountability obligations of grantees under the Australian Government's schools assistance legislation for 2005-08, Brethren schools will not be required to participate in the national sample assessments under the ICT Assessment Project being carried out during this period. I should add that this would not extend to the national sample assessments in science and civics and citizenship education.

While my Department is committed to integrating e-government strategies in line with the Australian Government's Better Services, Better Government strategy, provision is made for individual circumstances. My Department's data collections for the Financial Questionnaire, Financial Accountability and Annual Schools Census already accommodate the requirements of the Brethren schools to respond on paper.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brendan Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

BRENDAN NELSON