

**EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
2007-08 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING**

**Outcome**            2

**DEEWR Question No. EW21\_08**

Senator Boswell provided in writing.

**Question**

School Chaplaincy Program

In reference to the comments of Mr Sheedy in the Education Estimates Committee held on 20 February 2008 in response to the following question by Senator Boswell when asked "Can you assure us that there will be no reduction in the spiritual focus of the program?" Mr Sheedy said "that would depend on how many schools wanted to switch from a religious chaplain to a secular counsellor when their current funding agreement expired."

I ask the Minister when the changes are made to the National School Chaplaincy Program: Will the introduction of a secular counsellor be a last resort option for a school if a religious chaplain cannot be found; or does the school have an option to employ a secular counsellor if there is a religious chaplain available?

**Answer**

Schools may only appoint a secular care worker if they have not been able to source a religious chaplain.