

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0862_13

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Helping Children with Autism package

1. How is professional development for teachers and other school staff provided under the Helping Children with Autism package?
2. Which regional and remote areas have benefited from workshops to date under the scheme, both for teachers and parents/carers?
3. Which regional and remote areas will benefit in the coming year?
4. How is the location of the various workshops determined? Is it based on need (i.e. data as to number of children with ASD in that area?).
5. Is there data available to indicate the prevalence of students with ASD in regional and remote schools in NSW?
6. Are the workshops considered successful?
7. Please give an indication of the level of attendance at the workshops both teacher and parent/carer in regional and remote areas in the last 2 years?
8. Parents are not eligible for any assistance to help with costs of attending the workshop, such as travel or child minding, is this causing any issues with attendance, particularly in remote areas where parents may have to travel some distance to attend the workshop?

Answer

1. How is professional development for teachers and other school staff provided under the Helping Children with Autism packages?

The Positive Partnerships initiative is the education element of the Helping Children with Autism package. The Professional Development component of the initiative aims to ensure that teachers, school leaders and school staff who participate in the training acquire sound knowledge and understanding of autism spectrum disorder and its impact in the school and classroom.

Teachers are selected to take part in professional development workshops in consultation with state and territory education authorities.

Teachers and school staff undertaking professional development training undertake a total of five (5) days of workshops, including online and face-to-face. The training is modular based. The training provided meets university standards and provides participants with the option of gaining recognition towards higher qualifications.

2. Which regional and remote areas have benefited from workshops to date under the scheme, both for teachers and parents/carers?

Schools from the following outer regional and rural areas have participated in Positive Partnerships Professional Development (2008–2012):

NSW: Goulburn, Pambula, Crookwell, Young, Armidale, Tamworth, Gunnedah, Glen Innes, Narromine, Buninyong, Dubbo, Condobolin, Canowindra, Singleton, Jindera, Lockhart, Narrandera, Deniliquin, Griffith, Yoogali, Grafton, Ulong, Woodenbong, Parkes, Forbes.

NT: Alice Springs, Malak, Nhulunbuy, Jingili, Namarluk, Bakewell, Brees Creek, Leanyer, Darwin, Acacia Hill, Jabiru, Palmerston, Alyangula area, Tamanmin, Wagaman, Girraween, Murrupurtiyanuwu, Living Waters, Sadadeen, Sandover group schools, Tanami group schools, Yirara.

TAS: Campbell town, Cressy, Evandale, Glen Dhu, Geeveston, Huonville, Burnie, Mountain Heights, Ulverstone, Wynyard, Stahan, Campania, East Derwent, Herdsman Cove, Margate, Sorrell, Exeter, Hagley Farm, Port Dalrymple, Youngtown, Beaconsfield.

SA: King Island, Roxby Downs, Gordon, Millicent North, Mt Gambier, Naracoorte, Tenison Woods, Ceduna, Cleve area, Cummjkins area, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Streaky Bay area, Whyalla, Berri, Loxton, Riverland, Waikerie, Airdale, Ardrossan, Clare, Curramulka, Edithburgh, Lameroo, Peterborough, Risdon Park, Gladstone, Port Pirie.

QLD: Mackay, Rockhampton, Queens Beach, Middlemount, Mirani, Proserpine, Calen, Whitsundays, Yeppoon, Emerald, Charleville, Killarney, Stanthorpe, Kingaroy, Bundaberg, Avoca, Gin Gin, Kepnock, Kilkivan, Norville, Gladstone, Tieri, Longreach, Bohlevalle, Ingham, Kirwin, Rasmussen, Oonoonba. Ayr, Pimlico, Quilpie, Roma, Normanton, Townsville.

WA: Karridale, Augusta, Margaret River, Bridgetown, Kambalda, Goldfields, Broome, Esperance, Merredin, Denmark, Castletown, Ravensthorpe, Yakamia, Albany, Mukinbudin, Roebuck, Geraldton, Narrogin, Northam, Kalgoorlie.

VIC: Bright, Myrtleford, Mansfield, Mitta Mitta, Timboon, Hamilton, Horsham, Mildura, Warracknabeal, Ararat, Kerang, Orbost, Airly, Noorindee, Mallacoota, Maffra, Stratford, Bundalaguah, Coimadai, Tallangatta, Mt Beauty, Moyhu, Cobram.

The following regional and remote locations have hosted Parent/Carer workshops (2008–2012):

NSW: Singleton, Batemans Bay, Katoomba, Armidale, Port Macquarie, Dubbo, Newcastle, Ballina, Griffith, Wagga Wagga, Broken Hill, Bega, Coffs Harbour, Orange, Taree, Tamworth, Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett, Maitland, Albury, Camden.

NT: Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs, Katherine.

QLD: Toowoomba, Cairns, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Mt Isa, Roma, Ipswich, Emerald, Bundaberg, Innisfail, Dalby, Gympie.

SA: Naracoorte, Port Augusta, Roxby Downs, Mt Gambier, Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Port Pirie, Riverland, Clare, Victor Harbour.

TAS: Devonport, Campbell Town, Huon, Launceston.

VIC: Benalla, Horsham, Warrnambool, Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Wodonga, Lakes Entrance, Portland, Ararat, Echuca, Shepparton, Seymour, Orbost.

WA: Busselton, Karratha, Albany, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Merredin, Broome, Mt Tom Price, Bunbury, Bridgetown, Narrogin, Northam.

3. Which regional and remote areas will benefit in the coming year?

Professional Development:

Location	Area
Lismore	Inner Regional
Albury	Inner Regional
Mandurah	Inner Regional
Geelong	Inner Regional
Hobart	Inner Regional
Port Macquarie	Inner Regional
Mt Gambier	Inner Regional
Darwin	Outer Regional
Emerald	Outer Regional
Broken Hill/Hay	Outer Regional
Gippsland	Regional

Regional, rural and remote school staff may also attend professional development workshops in these locations in 2013:

Location	Area
Adelaide (Metro North)	Metro
Brisbane CEC	Metro
Sydney	Metro
Adelaide (Metro South)	Metro
Canberra	Metro
Sydney (secondary)	Metro
Gold Coast	Metro
Melbourne(Eastern Metro)	Metro
Joondalup	Metro

Parent/Carer:

Location	Area
Barossa Valley	Regional
Tamworth	Regional
Lismore	Regional
Geelong	Regional
Margaret River	Regional
Horsham	Regional
Busselton	Regional
Warrigal	Regional
Karratha	Regional
Newcastle	Regional
Sale	Regional

Geraldton	Regional
Bathurst	Regional
Port Macquarie	Regional
Box Hill	Regional
Shellharbour	Regional
Ulladulla	Regional
Palmerston/Darwin	Regional
Bendigo	Regional
Swan Hill	Regional
Wollongong	Regional
Mildura	Regional
Burnie	Inner Regional
Launceston	Inner Regional
Hamilton	Outer Regional
Kalgoorlie	Outer Regional
Warrnambool	Outer Regional
Innisfail	Rural
Katherine	Rural/Remote
Broken Hill	Rural/Remote
Hay	Rural/Remote
Nhulunbuy	Rural/Remote
Mt Isa	Remote
Biloela	Rural
Moree	Rural/Remote
Narrabri/Coonabarabran	Rural/Remote
Port Augusta	Rural
Kingaroy	Rural

4. How is the location of the various workshops determined? Is it based on need (i.e. data as to number of children with ASD in that area)?

All decisions about locations of workshops are made by the relevant Positive Partnerships State/Territory Planning Group. This group has representation from all education sectors, and autism and community stakeholders. Decisions are based on the need as decided by the group.

5. Is there data available to indicate the prevalence of students with ASD in regional and remote schools in NSW?

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations does not collect this data. The NSW Department of Education and Communities is responsible for recording and collating this information.

6. Are the workshops considered successful?

Positive Partnerships has been well received by education and disability stakeholders and parents. An independent evaluation conducted by the Allen Consulting Group in 2011, was positive and confirmed the Australian Government's leadership role in targeting support to parents and teachers of students with autism.

The report found that Positive Partnerships is an appropriately designed program responding to the increasing number of children being diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and the current deficit in knowledge about providing a learning environment that supports their achievement of good educational outcomes. It is evidence based and reflects good practice. This report is available at <http://deewr.gov.au/helping-children-autism-positive-partnerships?resource=>

7. Please give an indication of the level of attendance at the workshops both teacher and parent/carer in regional and remote areas in the last 2 years?

Professional Development 2011-2012:

348 participants

Parent/Carer 2011-2012:

1064 participants

8. Parents are not eligible for any assistance to help with costs of attending the workshop, such as travel or child minding, is this causing any issues with attendance, particularly in remote areas where parents may have to travel some distance to attend the workshop?

Positive Partnerships is supportive of parents/carers attending for the hours in which they are able, and provides access to additional materials/information through the Key Local Facilitator who is resourced to support parents for three months following the workshop.

Positive Partnerships collaborates closely with local community support organisations to overcome difficulties associated with attendance by parents and carers. The format of the workshop is adjusted in response to local needs identified within a community (ie a one day model, supported by on-line content which can be followed up). Webinars are being developed in 2013 to further support parents and carers in remote areas.