

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2012-2013

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1009_13

Senator Mason asked on 14 February 2013, Hansard page 96

Question

Digital Education Revolution- Progress Reports and Payments

(Part A)

Senator Mason: About the progress payments not being made. Ms Paul: From us to them or from them to us? Senator MASON: From the Commonwealth to the states, in particular. Ms Paul: About payments not being made? Senator MASON: Yes, progress payments not being made. Did the letters from the department or the minister to state governments outline concerns about the strands of change? Ms Paul: In other words, you are asking in what way did we communicate our concerns. Senator MASON: Yes. Mr Hehir: Senator, I want to take the exact wording on notice. My recollection is that the advice identified that we were considering the reports but I will need to check that. Senator MASON: Was there any specificity about Commonwealth concerns? Mr Hehir: I would need to take that on notice. Senator MASON: Would there ever have been a letter from the Commonwealth to a state conceding that a state government had in fact met the requirements but that the department in any case did not know when the Commonwealth government would be releasing the money? Ms Paul: No. Senator MASON: Are you sure? Mr Hehir: I would take it on notice but I am certainly not aware of that. (page 97) Senator MASON: I thought so...

(Part B)

...I have a couple of points on that. Ms Bloor, you said before the dinner break that these strands of change were already embedded in the template, so they were already there but not focused upon; is that right? Ms Bloor: A couple of years ago—and I would have to confirm on notice when, but I believe it was when the DER evaluation strategy was confirmed through the Australian ICT in Education Committee—additional reporting lines were put into the progress reports to address those.

Answer

(Part A)

When DEEWR distributed the template for the July 2012 Progress Report, it highlighted that the assessment process would focus on how education authorities are addressing the four elements of the Digital Education Revolution (DER) - leadership, teacher capability, learning resources and infrastructure - following achievement of the one to one computer to student ratio. While the assessment process was ongoing, DEEWR did not indicate to any education authorities that their Progress Reports had met the requirements that had been set. In response to queries from education authorities regarding the delay in payment, DEEWR advised education authorities only that the assessment process had not been finalised and that it was unable to give a timeframe for when this might occur.

(Part B)

The DER Strategic Plan was approved by the Productivity Agenda Working Group of the Council of Australian Governments, on 5 September 2008. This Plan was developed to guide the implementation of the DER and related initiatives. It outlined that the DER required coordinated action to achieve the national vision of preparing schools and teachers for effective 21st Century learning. As a result, the four strands of change were developed, which were considered appropriate for joint national action to progress the DER. The four strands of change are:

- **Leadership** – to ensure schools have a coordinated plan for providing infrastructure, learning resources and teacher capability to address educational challenges of the 21st Century.
- **Infrastructure** – access to digital teaching and learning resources and tools for processing information, building knowledge and for communication and collaboration.
- **Learning Resources** – to stimulate, challenge and assist students in achieving desired learning outcomes.
- **Teacher Capability** – teachers have the skills and tools to design and deliver programs that meet students' needs and harness the benefits and resources of the digital revolution.

The four strands of change were subsequently reflected in the DER National Partnership with the states and territories and DER Funding Agreements with the non-government sector. Education authorities were first required to report against the four strands of change in the September 2009 progress report. Since this time, all progress reports have requested this information.