

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1  
**Output Group:** 1.1 – Funding for schools

#### DEST Question No. E143\_05

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

#### Question:

In February changes were announced bringing catholic schools into the SES funding system. While this may have helped catholic schools in general, it did not help those in the Northern Territory for various reasons. It also did nothing to recognise the very high costs of school operations in the NT where the Catholic Education Office estimates these costs are 50 – 60% higher than in the bigger states.

The Commonwealth did recognise this in part and the Minister promised additional capital assistance for catholic schools in the NT.

What funds have actually been provided?

To which schools?

Is this a “one off “ or annual assistance?

What accountability processes are in place from these funds?

#### Answer:

##### *Catholic schools into the SES funding system*

During 2003 all independent non-government schools' SES scores were recalibrated against 2003 student addresses and the 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics Population Census. SES scores for the 2005-2008 quadrennium were also calculated for Catholic systemic schools based on their 2003 student addresses and the 2001 Census.

Catholic school systems will come into the SES system in 2005 on the basis that Catholic systemic schools will attract funding on a school-by-school basis according to the socioeconomic status of their school communities. Schools that would attract less money by being funded on the basis of their SES score will have their funding maintained at their current 2004 level in real terms.

The Northern Territory Catholic Education Commission will not receive additional money as a direct result of coming into the SES system because all Catholic systemic schools in the Northern Territory will have their funding maintained. However, the increase in funding for 2005-2008 over 2001-2004 will be \$12 million or 23% due to the commitment to continue using Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) as the indexation method.

##### *Capital assistance for NT Catholic schools*

The Minister has announced an additional \$17 million in capital funding will be provided over the 2005-08 quadrennium for non-government schools, including Catholic and Independent, in remote areas of the Northern Territory. This funding will be allocated as follows:

2005 -	\$4m
2006 -	\$4.3m
2007 -	\$4.3m
2008 -	\$4.4m

This funding is in addition to Australian Government capital funding of over \$840,000 which will be provided for non-government schools in the Northern Territory each year under the Capital Grants Program.

Implementation details are currently being considered, however it is anticipated that the arrangements will be similar to those provided under the Capital Grants Program. Thus the \$17m will be administered through the Northern Territory Block Grant Authority (BGA), an independent body which assesses applications for capital funding and makes recommendations to the Australian Government. The BGA will bring forward recommendations for projects to be funded under this initiative. Recommendations for initial funding in 2005 are expected early in 2005.

Accountability requirements similar to those applying under the Capital Grants Program will apply to the additional \$17 million. These include an annual financial accountability statement relating to grants received and expenditure, as well as information on completed projects.