

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. E254_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refer E835_04

Question:

Please explain why Hillcrest Christian College, Victoria, which clearly presents itself on its website as being a single entity with two campuses (Ayr Hill and Nyora), is treated by DEST as two separate schools for funding purposes.

What material difference does it make in terms of funding, policy or any other outcomes, that the school is so treated?

The school is apparently trying to sell its Nyora campus. What consequences will that sale have for DEST funding of the school?

Answer:

Hillcrest Christian College

Hillcrest Christian College (McDonald's Track, Nyora) commenced in 1981 as a non-systemic, co-educational school offering primary and secondary levels of education.

In 1994, the approved authority of the school sought to establish a new campus at Clyde North (also known as Ayr Hill). Under the governing legislation at that time, the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 1992*, a proposed campus that was more than 5 kilometres from the existing school must be treated as a new school and assessed by the relevant New Schools Committee. The Victorian New Schools Committee approved Hillcrest Christian College (Soldiers Road, Clyde North) as a new school from 1 January 1996.

In terms of funding, both schools were founding members of the Victorian Christian Schools System (which also commenced from 1 January 1996) and as such, both received funding at the System's funding category (ERI Category 10).

From 1 January 2001, both schools left the System. Under the SES funding arrangements, Nyora has a funding level of SES 92 (61.2% of AGSRC for primary and secondary), while Clyde North has a Year 2000 funding level of 47.5% for primary and 53% for secondary (as an SES score of 101 was calculated).

The College has received several grants totalling \$951,958 under the Australian Government's Capital Grants Programme for the Nyora campus in 1990, 1991, 1993 and 1996. The Australian Government retains a right of repayment of these grants (at a depreciated rate) for 20 years should the facilities built with those grants be sold or used for purposes other than those agreed by the Australian Government.

The Department has reached agreement with Hillcrest Christian College that should the Nyora campus be sold and used by the new owner for a purpose other than a school, the responsibility for repayment of capital funding will be transferred to the Ayr Hill campus.