

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.2 – Assistance for individuals including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E080_06

Senator Carr asked on 2 June 2005, EWRE Hansard page 7.

Question:

Can you tell me which studies you have drawn upon?

Answer:

Studies drawn on to develop the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative

A major policy objective of the Australian Government is to provide all young people in Australia with strong foundational literacy skills. The Australian Government recognises that effective literacy is a key skill which enables all Australians to successfully participate in schooling, further study, training and work.

One of the main studies that has underpinned the focus on literacy is the Australian Council for Educational Research (1997) *Mapping Literacy Achievement: Results of the 1996 National School English Literacy Survey*, ACER, Camberwell. A significant finding of this study was the wide range of achievement among Australian school children at Years 3 and 5 and the difficulties this places on teachers in planning and conducting classroom programmes.

The review of the Indigenous Education Direct Assistance Programme included a review of the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS), which provides funding for extra tuition for Indigenous students who are assessed by their relevant educational institution as needing some tuition over and above that which is normally provided by the institution. The review found individual tuition can make a difference to performance where the needs of the student are clearly matched with the expertise of the tutor.

The pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative is an innovative and practical measure, informed by the findings of the above studies and designed to be additional to any other assistance children may receive during school hours. The pilot was developed to enable access to valuable one-to-one reading tuition delivered outside school hours.

An independent evaluation will run concurrently with the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative. It will investigate the impact of the pilot on student reading development, and the effectiveness of the pilot as a means of assisting children who did not meet the Year 3 national reading benchmark in 2003. The evaluation will provide valuable information for the development of future programmes in literacy.