

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.3 – Assistance for quality teaching and learning

DEST Question No. E095_06

Senator Nettle provided in writing.

Question:

- (i) Is it true that this funding is dependent upon a Coalition member of federal parliament being invited to the school to perform a ceremony?
- (ii) Is it true that if the local member of federal parliament is not a member of one of the Coalition parties, then his or her attendance is not sufficient?
- (iii) How is this justified? Does this not amount to politicisation of public schools? Why is attendance by the local Member of Parliament not sufficient?

Answer:

Funding linked to Flagpoles

- (i) Reimbursement of costs is dependent on schools contacting the Schools Liaison Officer in the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training to arrange attendance by an Australian Government representative at an opening ceremony, and then advising the Department that a date for an opening ceremony has been set.
- (ii) If a representative of the Australian Government is unable to attend, a local member of federal parliament can officiate at an opening ceremony.
- (iii) The requirements reflect the fact that it is an Australian Government initiative. As the Australian Government funds the flagpoles, schools are requested to seek attendance by an Australian Government representative at a flag raising ceremony. This does not preclude any other members of Parliament from being invited to attend, and speak at, a flagpole ceremony, or from officiating at a flagpole ceremony if no Australian Government representative is available.