

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. E098_06

Senator Nettle provided in writing.

Question:

What steps will the government take to address the devastating shortage of English as a Second Language teachers in public schools serving communities with high levels of Non-English Speaking Background families?

Answer:

Teacher Shortage

The Australian Government makes a significant contribution towards the costs of educating non-English speaking background primary and secondary school students in State schools.

The Australian Government English as a Second Language - New Arrivals (ESL-NA) Programme provides funding to State and Territory government and non-government education authorities to assist with the cost of delivering intensive English language tuition for eligible newly-arrived migrant primary and secondary school students.

A one-off per capita grant (\$4,854 in 2004) is payable to education authorities for each eligible student. The payment is supplemented annually in line with movements in the Average Government School Recurrent Costs Index.

The ESL-NA Programme is demand driven. In the 2004 calendar year, 10 688 students across the country were assisted at a cost of almost \$52 million. Over \$46 million of this funding was provided to the government education authorities for state schools across the country. The NSW Department of Education and Training received over \$18.8 million of this funding in 2004.

Administration of funding provided under the ESL-NA Programme is the responsibility of education authorities. Funding may be used to employ English as a Second Language teachers.

ESL-NA funding for the 2005-2008 quadrennium is estimated at \$252.6 million.

In addition, over the 2005-2008 quadrennium, the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs (LNSLN) Programme will provide an estimated \$2.1 billion to support the most educationally disadvantaged students, including students with a language background other than English. The School Grants element of the Programme will contribute an estimated \$1.87 billion nationally to government and non-government education authorities over the quadrennium. Of this funding approximately 28% is calculated using a Language Background Other than English allocative mechanism based on the ABS Census.

The State and Territory education authorities are responsible for the administration of the Schools Grants element of the LNSLN Programme within their system and schools. Funding provided under the LNSLN Programme may be used, for example, to employ English as a

Second Language teachers, teacher aides and for teacher professional development. Types of initiatives funded under the programme include early intervention programmes to identify those students in need of additional assistance in literacy or numeracy and intervention strategies such as reading recovery.

Eligible students who are enrolled in a school at the time they are undertaking intensive ESL are also attracting General Recurrent funding (in government primary schools \$586 per student and government secondary schools \$860 per student).

General Recurrent funding may be used to employ English as a Second Language teachers.