

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

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

#### **DEST Question No. E104\_06**

Senator Allison provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

Are there any plans to raise or lower the standard of the current Year 3 national reading benchmark? Is the Year 3 national reading benchmark being examined as part of the review of the Government inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy?

#### **Answer:**

##### *Year 3 National Reading Benchmark*

The development of the national literacy and numeracy benchmarks was realised through a cooperative process involving all State and Territory school authorities, the Australian Government and representatives of non-government schools. The development work was undertaken by Curriculum Corporation and informed by evidence such as levels of achievement as demonstrated in national surveys, State assessment programs and international data. The development process involved both technical expertise and extensive consultation. Those involved included all key school education authorities, academic experts in literacy and numeracy, educational testing experts, parent groups, teachers and teacher professional organisations.

The national benchmarks that underpin the reporting of student achievement describe nationally agreed minimum acceptable standards for aspects of literacy and numeracy at particular year levels. That is, they represent the minimum acceptable standard of literacy and numeracy that a student must have at a particular year level in order for the student to continue to make progress at school. The benchmarks do not attempt to describe the whole range of literacy learning, nor the full range of what students are taught; nor do they try to describe the full range of student achievement.

Education Ministers agreed in July 2003 to move towards enhanced reporting of literacy and numeracy achievement. In addition to reporting the percentage of students achieving national literacy and numeracy benchmarks this would enable a range of student achievement to be reported.

On 30 November 2004 the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson, MP, announced details of the Australian Government National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy. The Inquiry will be a broad, independent examination of reading research, teacher preparation and practices for the teaching of literacy, particularly reading. One of the objectives of the Inquiry is to examine the effectiveness of assessment methods being used to monitor the progress of students' early reading learning. A report of the Inquiry's findings will be prepared in the second half of 2005.