

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. E106_06

Senator Allison provided in writing.

Question:

Who is the current broker for the Tutorial Voucher Initiative (TVI) for Tasmanian Government Schools?

- a. How many Tasmanian Government school students qualified for the vouchers? Have any of these students received their voucher yet? Why not?
- b. Why should eligible Tasmanian Government school students miss out on the \$700 vouchers when eligible Government school students in other states are receiving them?
- c. Is the use of tendering in the policy initiative a flaw?
- d. Was the Tasmanian Government ever consulted about the TVI prior to its announcement? If not, isn't it then understandable that they are not interested in the policy? What is DEST doing to address this problem?
- e. What other inconsistencies are there between the States in the delivery of the TVI? (eg. Different hours of delivery from different providers?) Does this disadvantage some states?
- f. Please list all areas where tutors were required for the TVI but could not be found.

Answer:

Broker arrangements for the Tutorial Voucher Initiative (TVI) for Tasmanian Government Schools

The broker for Tasmanian government schools is the Department of Education, Tasmania. The Minister announced it on 1 July 2005.

- a. Approximately 245* students who did not meet the Year 3 national reading benchmark in 2003 who attended Tasmanian government schools are eligible to access the Tutorial Voucher Initiative. Parents of eligible students who are attending government schools will be able to access the vouchers by contacting the Tasmanian Department of Education.
* this estimate is according to 2001 benchmark data.
- b. In April this year Minister Wriedt agreed to provide to parents their child's Year 3 national reading benchmark for 2003. Parents will be able to enquire about the tutorial vouchers by contacting the Tasmanian Department of Education.
- c. No. This is a pilot Initiative and an open tender process was an appropriate method to identify suitable organisations to provide the brokerage services across all States and Territories. Both government and non-government organisations were welcome to submit a tender.

- d. There was no interest shown in the pilot TVI by the Tasmanian Government prior to 1 April 2005 when the Tasmanian Minister for Education agreed to provide to parents their child's Year 3 national reading benchmark for 2003. Parents can enquire about the vouchers by contacting the Tasmanian Department of Education.
- e. State and Territory Brokers are responsible for determining appropriate rates and tuition duration for tutors they contract according to the market for those services in each jurisdiction. There has been no indication to date that variations between States and Territories are a disadvantage in delivery of the pilot Initiative. An independent evaluation of the TVI will be conducted and will assess this aspect of the pilot.
- f. It is too early to determine if tutors are unavailable for certain locations at this time. Brokers are recruiting suitable tutors on an ongoing, continual basis in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. An independent evaluation of the TVI will be conducted and will assess this aspect of the pilot.