

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2007-2008 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 1 – Funding for Schools

DEST Question No. E162_08

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

Question:

Government is providing around \$121 million over 4 years to 2010-11 to fund a regional/remote loading in addition to current funding. State and Territory governments will be required to provide an equivalent increase in resources for these schools. This measure is to recognise the additional costs of providing education in regional and remote Australia, will help to improve learning opportunities and outcomes. It will be calculated using the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA). Schools in "Moderately Accessible" locations will get an additional 5%, Remote schools 10% and very remote 20% additional funding.

While not all schools here will be Indigenous, I suspect the majority, certainly in the NT will be so I have the following questions:

1. How will this system work – will DEST automatically do all the calculations and the schools get additional funding?
2. Or will schools have to wait until the relevant state or territory authority has matched the funds?
3. How will these funds be distributed? Through state and territory authorities or direct to schools?
4. When will schools know about what additional funds they accrue under this program?
5. Will these funds be tied in any way – for example only recurrent?
6. Or will schools have a degree of autonomy on how they are used – local knowledge is often the best in determining how best to improve outcomes?
7. Will homeland schools, where they exist, be eligible? For example at Yirrkala (NT) we have Laynhapuy Schools, a separate central hub which actually help several homelands to run recognised schools out at homelands. Will Laynhapuy Schools be eligible for this additional funding?
8. At Galiwinku I believe the main school, Shepherdson College, run homeland schools – will they qualify for additional funding for the provision of education at their homeland schools?

Answer:

1. Eligible non-government schools or campuses will receive the additional regional and remote loading based on a percentage of their SES score funding entitlement for each student in the relevant location. Non-government schools classified as 'Moderately Accessible', 'Remote' or 'Very Remote' will receive an additional 5 per cent, 10 per cent or 20 per cent respectively of the general recurrent funding

entitlement associated with their SES score calculated on the number of students receiving education at each location.

The Department will automatically do the calculations.

2. The loading will be paid to eligible non-government schools from 1 January 2008 with their general recurrent funding. The next schools funding agreement will require state and territory governments to provide an equivalent increase in funding for regional and remote government schools from 2009.
3. The loading will be paid to eligible non-government schools through existing payment mechanisms.
4. Independent non-government schools have been advised by letter if they are eligible for the loading. Systemic schools, including Catholic systemic schools, have been advised through their system authority.
5. Eligible non-government schools can spend the funding as it chooses in line with accountability requirements for the general recurrent funding provided to non-government schools by the Australian Government.
6. See answer to Question 5.
7. All eligible non-government schools that are eligible to receive the loading have been notified.
8. See answer to Question 7.