

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome 2

DEEWR Question No. EW0345_10

Senator MacDonald asked on Wednesday 3 June 2009, EEWR Hansard page 89.

Question

Funding for Indigenous students in North Queensland schools

Senator MacDonald outlined that amendments to the Schools Assistance Bill were included because of concerns expressed by stakeholders that there would otherwise have been a fall in funding for Indigenous students from remote areas attending schools in non-remote areas.

(a) What funding did schools in North Queensland attract for Indigenous students from remote areas attending schools in non-remote areas under the previous legislation?

(b) What funding did schools in North Queensland attract for Indigenous students from remote areas attending schools in non-remote areas subsequently as a result of these amendments?

Answer

The Indigenous Funding Guarantee ensures that non-government schools will receive funding in 2009 at least comparable to that provided for Indigenous students in 2008. The total funding for the Indigenous Funding Guarantee for the 2009 Program Year is capped at \$5.5 million.

The amendments to the Schools Assistance Bill provided an additional level of assurance that schools would not lose funding under the new arrangements for the payment of supplementary funding for Indigenous students from 2009, notwithstanding the provisions for the Indigenous Funding Guarantee. This was in response to stakeholder concerns, including those from the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC).

The amendments provided, among other things, that the regulations may specify an additional amount of assistance for Indigenous students from remote areas attending schools in non-remote areas. In the event that the Indigenous Funding Guarantee does not prove to be effective in ensuring that non-government systems and schools receive funding in 2009 comparable to that provided in 2008, then the Government may move to implement the regulations. This will not be able to be accurately determined until all 2009 payments have been made.

The provision for regulations did not automatically provide additional funding where schools are enrolling Indigenous students from remote areas. Therefore:

- (a) There was no funding for this purpose under the previous legislation.
- (b) There was no funding automatically provided under the Amendments.

In respect of funding to the QCEC, in 2008, the Commission received \$7,974,408 in Indigenous program funding compared to \$8,104,450 in Indigenous Supplementary Assistance for 2009 (initial 2008 rates). This represents an increase of \$130,042 in funding between 2008 and 2009.