

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0145_11

Senator Williams provided in writing

Question

SCHOOL TERM HOSTELS

School Term Hostels at Broken Hill, Cobar and Dubbo provide accommodation for students who live in remote areas and would not otherwise be able to access schooling. Allison House at Broken Hill is one such hostel but is struggling to survive. Does the Department understand and value the role played by these hostels? Is there any funding available to them for capital works? Where can non profit organisations such as these access funding? Does the Commonwealth have any checks and balances on what funding the State Government allocates for these types of organisations? How would the Commonwealth accommodate these students (17 in Broken Hill) if Allison House was forced to close because it could not get Government funding for capital improvements?

Answer

DEEWR recognises the service that non government school term hostels provide to rural students.

Australian Government funding for the Non Government School Term Hostels program, which provided funding to eligible hostels to be used for maintenance, operational and capital costs, was incorporated in the \$47.5 billion National Education Agreement from January 2009.

In January 2009, DEEWR advised hostels that had received funding in 2008 under the Non Government School Term Hostels program of the new National Education Agreement arrangement and advised them to contact their state or territory department regarding funding arrangements from 2009.

DEEWR does not have data on funding provided by states and territories to individual hostels.

The Australian Government provides assistance to the families of students who are unable to attend an appropriate government school on a daily basis due to geographic isolation. Under the Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme, eligible families receive an allowance where students need to either board away from the family home, undertake study at home using distance education methods, or where the family is required to maintain a second family home close to an appropriate government school.