

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

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

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0148_11

Senator Xenophon provided in writing.

Question

**BUILDING THE EDUCATION REVOLUTION DISCREPANCY OF QUOTES TO
CONSTRUCT WATER TANKS**

It has been reported in the media that there is a huge discrepancy between the quotes the five schools have received for the construction of these tanks. While some differences due to site requirements and so on can be expected, the quotes vary from approximately \$27,000 to \$116,000. Given that there have been previous reports of BER roting, will the department be examining these quotes to ensure schools are fairly charged?

Answer

The South Australian Government Department of Education and Children Services (DECS) is responsible for ensuring value for money at the project level for each and every BER project that they undertake. DECS has advised that:

- new buildings in schools assessed as having a “high” or “very high” fire risk shall be provided with two of 35,000L above ground concrete or steel water tanks for a total storage capacity of 70,000L. The tanks shall be designed and installed in accordance with the South Australian Fire Authorities Built Environs Section Policy No 14 “Above Ground Water Storage Tanks for Fire Fighting Purposes” including:
 - associated, easily accessible hardstand areas for fire appliances
 - pipes and valves
 - quick fill facilities
 - tank gauge
 - tank signage
 - tank overflow.
- the cost of installing water tanks varies from site to site depending on a number of factors including the actual purpose of the tanks, excavations for siting of tanks, concreting, retaining walls, and installation of the 100mm fire main; and
- all components of the builder's costs are assessed and accepted as value for money, taking into account advice received from independent cost management consultants and government cost managers in the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure. Any costs from builders that do not represent value for money in comparison to recognised industry benchmarks

are not accepted.

DEEWR understands that where two 35,000 litre concrete water tanks are required, most manufacturers do not transport prefabricated concrete tanks larger than 10,000 litres because of their size and weight. Larger concrete tanks are typically constructed on site.

The department will monitor the costs of this project.