

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

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

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0356_11

Senator Scullion asked on 3/06/2010, Hansard page 21.

Question

BOARDING FACILITIES - ACCESS

Senator SCULLION—I can recall them being closely involved in the construction and the process with the Tiwi college. It was part of a shared responsibility agreement that said, ‘We will effectively build the college.’ It was a school so that people were far enough away from the community so they would not be influenced by, ‘Well, I just don’t like this. I’m just going to say that I just don’t like it and go home.’ They decided it should be far enough away to do that. It would be a school. That was a trial, which I have to say, being out there at the opening the other day, although it has been running for some time, appears to be quite successful. It seems now there has been a change. If we are now building something close to Wadeye, the people who live in the town can say, ‘Well, my kid who is living in my house can now go and live in a boarding college that might not be too far away.’ There seems to have been quite a significant change from what I recall to be a trial, which was at Tiwi Island. There is quite a significant difference in that it was a schooling and education facility. I am surprised that we are now nearly three years down the track and some of those fundamental answers that we need in terms of access and who is going to be in the school in the circumstances still appears to me to be a bit vague. Do you think there will be a point under which I can ask you the questions, ‘Who will have access to this?’, and ‘What will be the catchment that people will have access to it?’ Normally that is a pretty strict liability because if you let one in, you create a lot of questions around that. You have spent a lot of time in terms of consultation, you might not have signed a cheque yet, but expectation is built on consultation, sometimes the correct one, often incorrect in these areas. When do you think we are going to be able to get some definitive answers around access to these boarding colleges? It has been such a long time and all we have been doing is consulting now for nearly three years. In the fundamental area of access, one would have thought that we would be able to have a clearer answer on that particular issue.

Ms Wall—I expect it would be quite soon, as I said, as we finalise the contract with Aboriginal Hostels Ltd. That is on the basis of a business plan. In fact some of those details may have been agreed now and I could get that to you fairly soon. I will take that on notice and we will get back to you as soon as possible on that.

Answer

The client group, and therefore, catchment area, for each boarding facility will be negotiated with relevant stakeholders from each of the targeted regions, including Traditional Owners, community members, education providers and government and non government organisations with an education interest in the area.

The operator of each boarding facility, in collaboration with DEEWR, community representatives and boarding and education experts, will develop operating policies and procedures for the facility. This will ensure that the management of the facilities is informed by the users of the services.