

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

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

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0372_11

Senator Cormann asked on 3/06/2010, Hansard page 52.

Question

Trade Training Centres Clustering

Senator CORMANN—.....I am just looking here at the Ngukurr School in Roper River which is clustered with the Borroloola Community Education Centre, the Minyerri School in Hodgson Downs and the Numbulwar School. They are 200 kilometres, 328 kilometres and 140 kilometres away. This is not the close proximity as you were talking about before. How long and how far will students have to travel between schools on average?

Mr De Silva—I would have to take it on notice in terms of particular details of a particular TTC project.

Answer

Under the program schools are able to apply and operate as a cluster. This way schools can cooperate in terms of sharing training facilities and teachers to broaden the choice of training options for students that align with the particular circumstances they face.

Ngukurr School in Roper River is the Lead School for this approved Round Two project. The approved cluster schools are Minyerri School, Hogson Downs; Numbulwar School, Katherine; Borroloola Community Education Centre, Borroloola; and Wugularr School, Beswick. Numbulwar School has advised that it has reluctantly withdrawn from the cluster because poor access during the wet season means that neither it nor other schools would get full value from their contribution to the cluster. Numbulwar is currently exploring establishing a facility that would facilitate all year round VET delivery.

The Trade Training Centre in Ngukurr is to operate as a central hub for the other schools. On average the schools are 264 km from Ngukurr. The schools proposed this approach because it is more effective to use block release for training on specialist equipment at Ngukurr and to use distance training for theoretical components. The model was also endorsed by the NT Department of Education and Training and the partner Registered Training Organisation as it has been an effective model used by Charles Darwin University to provide vocational education and training to indigenous students located in remote communities.

The schools also indicated that a centrally located program, as opposed to town-centred programs, is expected to lead to improved educational outcomes because

there is more capacity for concentrated training. Centralised facilities and equipment also leads to improved resource allocations. Ultimately, students who acquire vocational skills and qualifications through the centre will be able to make a positive contribution when they return home and build capacity in what are, in some cases, disadvantaged communities.