

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0207_12

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Government Schools National Support

Government schools national support School funding • Does the govt intend to cut abolish the current 'funding maintained' arrangements to the 1075 non govt schools nationally which will lose around \$617m in funding a year? • Does the govt realise this will result in higher school fees that will be passed onto parents? • Is the minister aware of a report in the SMH this month that teachers are being forced to spend valuable class time filling out paperwork to secure govt funding? Is it being looked at? • The SiMERR report also found needs for professional development and resources for teachers and student access to a broad range of learning resources are not being met in rural and regional areas. • Is the minister/dept aware of these reports? What specifically is being done to address these concerns in rural and regional areas? Regional stakeholders have told me of their disappointment that this concern was not addressed in the budget – how come?

Answer

School Funding

The Government will formulate its response to the Australian Government's Review of Funding for Schooling (the Review) panel's recommendations, including those addressing transitional arrangements, following receipt of the Review report.

Non-government schools are an integral part of the Government's vision for a diverse, innovative, transparent and high-quality education system. The Government has committed to the following:

- No school will lose a single dollar per student as a result of the Australian Government's Review of Funding for Schooling (the Review).
- Current funding arrangements for non-government schools have been extended to the end of 2013, and the end of 2014 for capital funding.
- The panel has been asked to provide advice on appropriate transitional assistance to help schools move easily and fairly to any new funding arrangements.

The Department is aware of the Sydney Morning Herald report (*Funding hunt keeps teachers out of class*, 16 May 2011). The Review is tasked with recommending a transparent, fair, financially sustainable and effective school funding system for all Australian students for long-term improvement in educational outcomes beyond 2013.

Science, ICT and Mathematics Education in Rural and Regional Australia

National Survey

The findings of the survey are being addressed through various national online initiatives that greatly improve accessibility to professional development and learning resources for teachers and students in rural and regional areas:

- The Australian Curriculum:
 - is published online, which enables it to be accessed by all members of the Australian community
 - will provide explicit advice on the achievement standards that all Australian students should be meeting
 - is supported by digital resources that have been aligned to the Curriculum to assist teaching and learning.
- The Digital Education Revolution is providing over \$2.4 billion to support the effective integration of information and communication technology (ICT) in Australian schools in line with the Government's broader education initiatives. Digital Education Revolution initiatives that will enhance accessibility to professional development and resources include:
 - Provision of new computers and other ICT equipment for students in years 9-12.
 - Further investment in digital resources for inclusion in the National Digital Learning Resources Network, a digital resource collection maintained by Education Services Australia that contains over 11,000 digital learning resources, over 5,000 of which are aligned to the Australian Curriculum.
 - The ICT Innovation Fund which supports four projects that will help improve the capability of pre-service teachers, enhance the capacity of in-service teachers and drive innovation through leadership in schools.
- The rollout of the National Broadband Network will give:
 - students who live in regional and remote regions greater opportunities to harness the educational potential of ICT.
 - students, parents and teachers access to similar bandwidth capabilities anywhere and at any time, enhancing access to learning resources and opportunities for communication and collaboration.