

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE-QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: Assistance for transitions through and from school

DEST Question No. E438_05

Senator Harradine provided in writing

Question:

What work has the Department done to investigate ways to assist pregnant and parenting students to complete their school or post-school education? Please provide copies of any work. What are the best ways to offer assistance? What assistance does the Department offer?

Answer:

Pregnant and/or Parenting Young Students and their Education

The Partnership Outreach Education Model (POEM) Pilot is designed to test new ways of engaging young people who become disconnected from mainstream education, and often their families and communities as well.

One POEM project caters for pregnant young women and young mothers while several other projects have significant participation of pregnant and parenting students.

An independent Evaluation of the POEM Pilot was released in October 2004. A copy of the evaluation is enclosed and is also available at www.dest.gov.au/schools/catspoems/poems.htm.

In reference to the cohort of pregnant and parenting young students the Evaluation found:

- on site crèche facilities were essential;
- the presence of trained child care workers and parenting programs help the young mothers develop their parenting skills;
- it was important to help the young mothers deal with the many issues which impact on their ability to engage in education including the logistics of simply getting to the project and ensuring that they are properly fed;
- it was necessary to address young mothers' broader personal issues; and
- there was a need to provide a comprehensive network of support services including significant others, grandparents and former students.

Funding for the POEM Pilot has been extended until 31 December 2005.