

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.2 – Assistance for individuals including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E548_06 - Final

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

Question:

Many schools reported that cultural programmes which had previously been successfully run and encouraged Indigenous students into more mainstream activities have been diminished (AEU Report page 3). The number of camps, excursions and sporting activities has been diminished. Could you explain the guidelines and why such programmes which had previously encouraged Indigenous students' attendance and involvement have been diminished?

Answer:

Cultural programmes

A culturally inclusive curriculum is a mainstream responsibility of systems and schools. Goals 20 and 21 of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy call for an appreciation and understanding of Indigenous histories, culture and identity by Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australian students. All governments have agreed to implement these goals.

A precondition of Australian Government funding to schools under the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* is a commitment by a State, Territory or relevant non-government school authority to the National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century, agreed by MCEETYA. The National Goals for Schooling also provide that all students understand and acknowledge the value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures to Australian society, and possess the knowledge and understanding to contribute to and benefit from reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Parent School Partnerships Initiative is generally focussed on approaches and initiatives to improve the education outcomes of Indigenous students. Although the programme does not preclude support for cultural activities, funding for cultural and sporting activities is limited to circumstances where there proponents can demonstrate strong links to the programme's objectives. School excursions can be supported where projects would, in all probability, lead to improved educational outcomes.