

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.1 – Funding for Schools

DEST Question Nos. E580_06 and E601_06 - Final

Senators Wong and Crossin provided in writing:

Refers to DEST Question No E080_06, E572_06, E578_06 & E638_06

- a. Who is conducting the intended evaluation of the pilot tutorial voucher initiative?
- b. What are its terms of reference, what is the value of the contract and when it is scheduled to report?
- c. How much of the budgeted funding for this initiative is unspent as at 1 November?

Regarding the following consultancy:

Schools Outcomes Group:

PRN6811

Contract No: 75773 - Select Tender

Erebus International

For Evaluation of the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative

\$336 270

- d. Is this ongoing? How were Erebus chosen? Who chose them? What was involvement of the Minister or his office in selection?
- e. What specifically were they asked to do? What process did they undertake to carry out the task? What consultations did they undertake? What are they producing?
- f. In answer to question E080_06 (Sen Carr) in June, it was stated that, '...an independent evaluation will run concurrently with the pilot tutorial voucher initiative'. Can you outline how this evaluation has progressed?

Answer:

Evaluation of pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative

- a. The evaluation of the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative is being carried out by Erebus International Pty Ltd.
- b. The terms of reference for the Evaluation are attached. The current value of the contract is \$343 970 – it was extended to include an additional \$7 700 provided for translation costs associated with the parent/caregiver survey. The evaluation is scheduled to provide a final report in early 2006.
- c. Financial information on spending to date for tutors under the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative is provided in the answer to questions E272_06, E578_05 and E638_06. It is anticipated that the expenditure under the pilot will rise rapidly as invoices are received for expenditure in December and January.

- d. The evaluation is scheduled to provide a final report in early 2006. Erebus International was selected through a select tender process. The tender was evaluated by a team from within the Department. The Minister and the Minister's office had no role in the selection of Erebus International as the successful tenderer.
- e. & f. The evaluation is progressing in accordance with its schedule and includes consultations and interviews with brokers, tutors, parents and, where possible, teachers. The evaluation will also examine brokers' reports throughout the pilot, analyse the parent/caregiver satisfaction surveys and the tutor feedback forms in addition to considering data from the pre and post tuition assessments. The evaluation will also examine any other feedback provided to brokers and the Department.

The end product of the evaluation will be a report to the Department. The report is currently being drafted.

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE TUTORIAL VOUCHER INITIATIVE

INTRODUCTION

The evaluation will investigate the effectiveness of the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative (TVI) as a means of assisting children who did not meet the Year 3 national reading benchmark in 2003. Under the Initiative eligible parents will be able to access one-on-one reading tuition for their child to the value of \$700 (GST exclusive). Brokers appointed in each State and Territory will administer the Initiative, and will be responsible for contracting tutors, confirming child eligibility, providing parents with a choice of tutors, and managing the administration of the Initiative.

The evaluation will have two key focus areas:

1. Impact

The evaluation will determine the impact of the pilot in relation to verifiable improvement in a student's reading skills.

In determining the impact on the students, the evaluation will need to consider:

- comparisons of pre and post tuition assessment;
- other evidence such as the parent's/caregiver's and tutor's comments and judgements as recorded on the *Parent/caregiver Satisfaction Survey* and *Tutor Feedback Form*;
- effectiveness of the one-on-one out of school tuition model in assisting children to improve their reading skills;
- sufficiency of the Tutorial Voucher (\$700, GST exclusive) in assisting children to improve in reading, including the number of hours of tuition provided by each tutorial credit;
- types of work programmes and tutoring methods that students undertook; and
- mechanisms for providing parents/caregivers with information on tutor performance.

2. Effectiveness

The evaluation will determine the effectiveness of the funding and conditions attached to the delivery model for the TVI.

Specifically, the evaluation of the delivery model will need to consider:

- the role of brokers in administering the TVI, including their responsibility for contracting tutors, confirming child eligibility and liaising with parents and schools;
- the provision of information about the Initiative by brokers to parents/caregivers, including the availability of brokers as a contact point for parents/caregivers;
- the management of the administration of the Initiative by the broker, including effective use of the TVI Information Management System, payment of tutors and keeping of records and files;
- the access to a choice of tutors by parents/caregivers, particularly in regional and remote areas;
- the effectiveness of delivery in regional and remote areas;
- the interaction the Initiative has with the school programme of participating children;
- the suitability of the venue where the tuition took place;
- the eligibility requirements for the Initiative; and
- the take-up and withdrawal rates in each State and Territory.