

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.1 – Funding for Vocational Education and Training

DEST Question No. E806_06

Senator Wong asked in writing

Question:

Will the new Vocational and Education and Training Ministerial Council have an Independent Secretariat?

If so:

- (a) what will be its annual budget?
- (b) how will it be funded?
- (c) where will it be located?
- (d) who will appoint the members?
- (e) to whom will they be responsible?

Answer:

Independent Secretariat for the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE)

An Independent Secretariat will support both the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) and its National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC). NSOC is the administrative arm of the Ministerial Council and is responsible for supporting the Ministerial Council and implementing its decisions. NSOC consists of the Chief Executive Officers of the Australian and State Government Departments responsible for training.

The Australian Government consulted with the States and Territories on proposed arrangements for the new national training arrangements, including the Terms of Reference and structure of the new MCVTE. All States and Territories have now agreed to the *2005-2008 Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce* and have also endorsed the *Framework for the New National Training System*, including the operation of the new MCVTE.

The protocols for the MCVTE, including the operation of the new Independent Secretariat were agreed by Ministers at the 18 November 2005 meeting of the MCVTE.

(a) Ministers agreed to fund the Independent Secretariat for MCVTE outside of the Agreement, subject to confirmation of the budget. It is anticipated that the budget for the Independent Secretariat will be considered by the MCVTE out of session.

(b) The Australian Government, State and Territory Governments have agreed that financial support for the Secretariat will be shared between all jurisdictions, with the Australian Government contributing 50 per cent and the States and Territories contributing the remainder based on an agreed formula.

(c) It has been agreed with State and Territory jurisdictions that the Independent Secretariat will be hosted within a State Department. It will be managed by the host CEO for payroll and administrative support.

As the Australian National Training Authority ceased operations on 30 June 2005, before the Skilling Australia's Workforce Bills received Royal Assent, *Interim* Secretariat arrangements have been put in place to allow for continued support for the Ministerial Council and NSOC. The Secretariat support to the MCTVE and NSOC has been temporarily hosted by the Queensland Department of Employment and Training. Arrangements are being put in place to now formalise the Independent Secretariat to be hosted by a State or Territory training authority.

(d) The host department will be responsible for staffing the Secretariat.

(e) State and Territory Governments have agreed that the Secretariat will report to the Chair of NSOC who is the Secretary of the Department of Education, Science and Training.