

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1. – Assistance for individuals including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E702_07

Senator Crossin provided in writing.

Question:

Also at May estimates there was a review going on into what was called originally the “Mission Schools Agreement” in the NT. At that time I think you said there was an interim agreement in place but community consultation was going on. Depending on this the Agreement the former “mission” schools could be treated the same as government schools. Was this review and consultation completed and what is the status of these “mission” schools now regarding funding?

Answer:

Mission Schools Funding

The funding arrangements for the Wadeye school flow from the "Mission Schools Agreement" made in 1979 between the Australian and NT Government. Under this Agreement, the Northern Territory Government accepted total responsibility for the support of the five mission schools.

In April 2005 through the Indigenous Affairs bilateral process, the Prime Minister and the NT Chief Minister, the Hon Claire Martin MP, agreed to revisit the 1979 Mission Schools Agreement.

In a project jointly funded by the Australian Government and the Northern Territory government, a series of consultations is underway with all stakeholders relevant to the mission school communities. The consultations being undertaken by Simpson Norris International aim to ensure that there is clear understanding by all stakeholders of the funding, reporting and governance arrangements for the provision of educational services and work through any transitional arrangements.

As an interim measure, from 1 January 2006, the five mission schools have been treated as government schools only for the purpose of allocating mainstream Australian Government funding programmes.