

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0643_11

Senator Siewert asked on 21/10/2010, Hansard page 40.

Question

FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS

Senator SIEWERT—I have one more question about the additional money that has gone to the schools. There was an increase in funding. Is the increase they got proportional, or a percentage shared amongst the schools, of the money that would have been given to the unit on top of other additional funding? As you would be aware, many of the schools need a considerable amount of funding to run because of the issues involved— isolation et cetera. So is it a double top-up or one top-up? Dr Bruniges—I cannot answer that question at the moment. I am happy to take it on notice.

Answer

From 1 January 2009 as part of the new *Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations* reforms, non-government school Indigenous funding that had previously been provided via six programs under the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* was consolidated into Indigenous Supplementary Assistance under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*. The changes were intended to reduce the administrative burden on schools and provide school authorities with increased flexibility as to how they could spend the funding. Funding was subject to a higher rate of indexation.

In addition to Indigenous Supplementary Assistance, non-government schools receive General Recurrent Grants funding under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*. In 2009, the 14 Aboriginal Independent Community Schools received \$9.2 million in funding under the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*, compared with \$8.9 million in 2008. This is despite a 1.45 per cent reduction in enrolments across the schools.

In 2010 the 14 Aboriginal Independent Community Schools received \$9 million despite a further fall in enrolments of 5.66 per cent since 2009.

Funding for the Aboriginal Independent Community Schools Support Unit has been provided through the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia, since 1990. This funding has been additional to other core funding arrangements. Since the new Federal Financial Relations reforms came into effect from 2009, the Australian Government has continued to provide additional transitional funding to the Unit while alternative arrangements to support the relevant schools could be considered.

The 14 Aboriginal Independent Community Schools are also able to access:

- funding provided through the Smarter Schools National Partnerships: Literacy and Numeracy, Improving Teacher Quality and Low SES Schools Communities;
- Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs funding, also through the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*; and
- funding provided under the Building the Education Revolution, Digital Education Revolution and Capital Assistance Grants.

The Department is currently negotiating a funding agreement with the Association of Independent Schools Western Australia which will provide additional funding for a further two years to ensure the 14 schools are adequately supported. The funding includes embedding literacy approaches and enhancing community engagement.