

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Cross Portfolio

DEEWR Question No. EW0854_12

Senator McKenzie asked on 20 October 2011, Hansard page 106

Question

The Regional Education Skills and Jobs Plans initiative

Mr Manthorpe: The regions in Victoria are Barwon, South-West Gippsland, Grampians, Hume and Loddon Mallee. Senator McKENZIE: You can take this on notice. I am wondering if you have taken into account, particularly with Loddon Mallee, what the implications for the Regional Education Skills and Jobs Plans would be under a revised Murray-Darling Basin Authority plan for Loddon Mallee? I would also like to know on notice the implications for the Latrobe Valley, which would be under central Gippsland, of the passing of the carbon tax and how that may change the work that has already been done on those regional jobs plans. Mr Manthorpe: We will take those on notice. Senator McKENZIE: Thank you very much.

Answer

The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans will focus on locally identified needs and priorities in the fields of education, skills development and employment and they will be developed and implemented locally. Consultations with local stakeholders, including Regional Development Australia (RDA) Committees, are underway. RDA is an Australian Government initiative, where RDA Committees develop local solutions to local issues. They build partnerships to develop strategies and deliver sustainable infrastructure and services to their regions.

These consultations with local stakeholders will inform the development of strategies to be implemented over the period to June 2014.

The Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans are active documents with a six monthly review period which means they can be adjusted to take account of changes in the local area from national reforms such as the Murray Darling Basin Plan and Clean Energy Future package.

As the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plan initiative unfolds, the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Coordinator would have regard for local market impacts and plan the best response at the local level. For example, in the Latrobe Valley the Hazelwood, Yallourn and Energy Brix power stations are among five generators nationally which have been invited to proceed to the negotiation phase of the Government's Contract for Closure Program as part of the Clean Energy Future

package. In the event that one or all of these power stations enter into a Contract for Closure, which have a preferred commencement timeframe of 1 July 2016, the local coordinator would be able to consult with local stakeholders and adjust the Gippsland plan to include preparatory education, skills and employment strategies.

The outcomes of the consultations on the draft Murray-Darling Basin Plan will help to position the Government to frame possible response options. These could include developing, with communities, strategies that meet the transition needs of local communities and take advantage of emerging opportunities for inclusion in the Regional Education, Skills and Jobs Plans within the Basin, including that for Loddon Mallee.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will continue to engage with the Departments of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport; and Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities to collaborate on providing local support to regional communities through the transition of policy reforms such as the Murray Darling Basin Plan and Clean Energy Future package.