BUDGET-IN-CONFIDENCE

24 FEB 2006

Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr President

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2006, jointly signed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon David Hawker MP, regarding a minor new policy proposal for the Citizenship Visits Programme (CVP).

My view remains that there this is a strong argument to combine the CVP and the Civics Education Travel Rebate programme administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training. I have therefore asked the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, to work with you to develop an outline of a joint proposal for my consideration before proceeding to the Expenditure Review Committee.

Given the tight time frame, this matter must be progressed by affected departments as a matter of priority. I would request that you work closely with Ms Bishop to ensure that the outline of a joint proposal is submitted to me by 1 March 2006.

A similar letter has been sent to the Speaker. This letter has been copied to the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Administration and Ms Bishop.

Yours sincerely

(John Howard)

BUDGET-IN-CONFIDENCE

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Representatives

BUDGET-IN-CONFIDENCE

The Hon. John Howard, MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

- 9 MAR 2005

Dear Prime Minister

We refer to your letter of 20 December 2004 in which you raised with us the prospect of closer cooperation between the Citizenship Visits Programme (CVP), administered by the Parliament, and the Educational Travel Rebate (ETR), administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Following your letter our officers considered the matter carefully, in consultation with officers of the Department of Education, Science and Training.

We have concluded that there is scope for greater co-operation between two programmes, and we have asked our respective officers to pursue that further. However, we feel that amalgamation of the two programmes is not appropriate. The CVP is a specific purpose payment for a visit focussed on the Parliament which must include participation in a Parliamentary Education Office programme, and facilitates the contact of students with Senators and Members as part of the parliamentary education experience. The ETR is a payment to visit Canberra as a tourist. The CVP payment is made for engaging in a parliamentary education programme, and the ETR has, as its prime purpose, the promotion of tourism.

Students visiting Parliament House under the CVP programme represent one component of the parliamentary education programme for schools which is delivered at Parliament House (about 20,000 of the total of about 110,000), making it efficient to administer the CVP as a component of this wider program. We would foresee potential inefficiencies, possible unintended disadvantages to students from regional Australia, and difficulties in coordination and the loss of a parliamentary focus if the CVP programme were administered apart from the general parliamentary education programme at Parliament House.

Because of the considerable interest of Senators and Members in the CVP and in visits by schools more generally to Parliament House, we would be reluctant to initiate any change which may diminish Senators' and Members' current capacity to have a say in setting and monitoring the terms and conditions of the CVP, or which may have a more general impact on the education programme at Parliament House.

The Parliamentary Education Office and the Department of Education, Science and Training already work together for greater coordination and clarification of the purposes and public notification of the two programmes. We have asked that this working relationship be developed further by, for example, including references to the ETR on printed and electronic information about the CVP.

We have written in similar terms to Dr Nelson, and understand that he in turn will be writing to you.

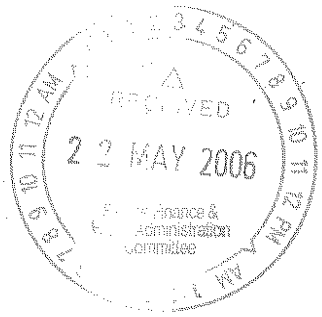
In closing, we wish to confirm that additional funding for CVP, as advised in our original submission of 18 November 2004, will be required for 2005-06 to 2007-08 because of the increasing participation of students who travel a long distance to visit the Parliament. We ask you to consider this request as part of the current Budget process.

Thank you for raising this matter. We believe the outcome will be better co-ordination between the programmes and enhanced civic education for young people visiting Canberra and our Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

PAUL CALVERT

DAVID HAWKER



PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

My dear Minister

Thank you for your letter of 8 March 2006 seeking approval to have your Civics Education and Parliament Travel Rebate (CEPTR) proposal considered as part of the 2006-07 Budget process.

The President of the Senate, Senator the Hon Paul Calvert and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon David Hawker MP, wrote to me on 2 March 2006 raising concerns about the amalgamation of the current Citizenship Visits Programme (CVP) and Civics Education Travel Rebate scheme. However, I am satisfied that your CEPTR proposal addresses their key concern that Parliamentary emphasis of CVP be retained under the new scheme by requiring recipients to visit Parliament House. I therefore agree that a CETPR proposal be brought forward for consideration by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC).

Your ERC submission on the CEPTR proposal should incorporate two options. The first option should provide for the establishment of CEPTR without additional supplementation from the Budget. The second option can address the enhancements to the programmes that you believe should be made as part of the amalgamation.

Senator Calvert and Mr Hawker have raised concerns about possible impacts of an amalgamated programme on access by students from regional areas and participation in programmes administered by the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO). I understand there are also concerns about the proposed requirement to visit Parliament House and five other institutions and a possible mismatch between the targeting of PEO programmes and access to CEPTR for year four students.

I would encourage you to consult Senator Calvert and Mr Hawker, and officials from my department, so that these concerns are adequately addressed in your ERC submission. In particular, the proposal that CEPTR recipients be required to visit Parliament House and five other institutions in Canberra may be considered excessive in some circumstances. I would ask therefore that you consider introducing some flexibility in the application of this requirement, in circumstances where it would be onerous or unreasonable.

I have copied this letter to Senator Calvert, Mr Hawker, the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and Administration.

Yours sincerely

Signed

17 MAR 2006

(John Howard)

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

17 MAR 2006

Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr President

Thank you for your letter of 2 March 2006, jointly signed by the Speaker of the Houses of Representatives, the Hon David Hawker MP, regarding the proposal to combine the Citizenship Visits Programme (CVP) and the Civics Education Travel Rebate.

Enclosed is a letter to the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, asking that a proposal for a Civics Education and Parliamentary Travel Rebate (CEPTR) be brought forward for consideration by the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC). I am grateful for the support that you have provided to CVP to date and believe that the CEPTR proposal can be improved with the benefit of your experience with, and knowledge of, CVP and programmes offered by the Parliamentary Education Office. Accordingly, I would be grateful if the Parliamentary Departments and the Department of Education, Science and Training could cooperate in the development of the proposals and their subsequent implementation should they be endorsed by ERC.

I am sure you would agree that the experience of school children and teachers visiting Canberra for civics education should reflect the efficient provision of government services across agencies.

A similar letter has been sent to Mr Hawker. This letter has been copied to the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Administration and Ms Bishop.

Yours sincerely

John Howard

(John Howard)

CABINET-IN-CONFIDENCE

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

President of the Senate *Speaker of the House of Representatives*

13 OCT 2005

The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, MP
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

We wrote to you on 15 February 2005 outlining our views on the possibility of closer coordination or amalgamation of the Citizenships Visits Program (CVP), administered by the Parliament, with the Educational Travel Rebate (ETR) administered under the National Capital Educational Tourism Project by the Department of Education, Science and Training. We offered to discuss our views with you but received no response. A copy of our letter is attached for your information.

We subsequently wrote to the Prime Minister to convey our views and to seek additional funding for CVP to meet the increasing demand for the program. The Prime Minister responded on 13 April 2005 advising us that additional funding had been approved for 2005-06 only and asking us to discuss with you the potential for closer cooperation or amalgamation of the two programs with a view to bringing forward a proposal in time for consideration by senior ministers in the 2006-07 Budget.

We are now writing to you to convey our views on the potential for closer cooperation or amalgamation of the two programs and to offer to discuss the matter with you.

We reiterate the view expressed in our letter of 15 February 2005 that we support greater coordination between the two programs, but do not support amalgamation. We believe that the synergies between the two programs have been overstated.

In our view an amalgamated program could only be administered through the Parliament House system which at present supports the CVP, as an executive agency could not have a central role in relation to a parliamentary program. However, an amalgamated program under the control of the Parliament would in our view be

untenable. The additional subsidies could be administered under an extension of the existing CVP program and would require some additional administrative support. While this step may lead to some administrative efficiencies, it would be an unacceptable hybrid of parliamentary and executive government programs. It should be noted that it would be exceptional for the Federal Parliament to have a role in a tourism project of an executive government with the primary function of assisting only one territory. Furthermore, as there are commercial components in the present eligibility requirements for the ETR, there would be a need to amend those guidelines because it would be inappropriate for the Australian Parliament to be seen to be supporting financial gain for targeted businesses operating in the ACT. It would also seem to us to be most inappropriate for students to be thanking the executive government in relation to a program delivered by the Parliament, as adoption of the current ETR guidelines would require.

We do not see a function of the Federal Parliament and its educational programs as promoting other national institutions in the ACT, although we are of course delighted at the obvious links between participation in programs administered by the Parliament and students visiting the institutions. If it is sought to promote visits to those entities, then another method should be employed.

However, we reiterate as we have previously advised you and the Prime Minister that we do support greater coordination between the two programs.

We would be pleased to discuss with you the opportunity to make a joint submission to the Prime Minister seeking appropriate funding for both programs if you and the Government wish to continue support for the ETR. To this point, we would support with you a submission for funding for the ETR on the same basis as CVP funding (ie Administered funding) which would quarantine this funding from departmental expenses. As we are required to make submissions to the Prime Minister by late October, an early response from you would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

PAUL CALVERT

DAVID HAWKER

(12)

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

President of the Senate | *Speaker of the House of Representatives*

- 3 NOV 2005

The Hon John Howard MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

You wrote to us on 13 April 2005 advising that additional funding had been approved for the Citizenship Visits Program (CVP) for 2005-06 and asking us to discuss with the Minister for Education, Science and Training the potential for closer cooperation or amalgamation of the CVP with the Educational Travel Rebate (ETR) administered by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

We have written to Dr Nelson outlining our views on the potential for cooperation or amalgamation of the two programs. (A copy of our letter to the Minister is attached.) You will note that we do not support amalgamation but have proposed to the Minister making a joint submission in the context of the 2006-07 Budget for the continued independent funding of each of the two programs.

We are awaiting a response from the Minister, but are conscious of the timing for the Senior Ministers' Review (SMR) and wished to make you aware of the action we have taken.

We hope to be able to put forward a proposal soon for consideration by the SMR. We will send a copy of this letter to the Treasurer and to the Minister for Finance and Administration.

Yours sincerely

PAUL CALVERT

DAVID HAWKER

(4)

PRIME MINISTER
CANBERRA

Senator the Hon Paul Calvert
President of the Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

20 DEC 2004

Dear Mr President

Thank you for your joint letter with the Speaker of the House of Representatives of 18 November 2004 seeking additional funding for the Citizenship Visits Programme.

I agree to additional funds of $0.1 million in 2004-05 and note these funds are for an administered programme and not additional departmental expenses.

In relation to additional funding for the forward years, I note the Department of Education, Science and Training administers the Education Travel Rebate, a programme with similar objectives to the Citizenship Visits Programme. I think it would be worthwhile for you to discuss with the Minister for Education, Science and Training, the Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, closer coordination in the provision of the travel subsidy and, if appropriate, amalgamation of the programmes.

You should write to me with your views on the possibilities for closer coordination, or amalgamation, by the end of February 2005 for consideration in the 2005-06 Budget process. I have also asked Dr Nelson to write to me with his views on this proposal.

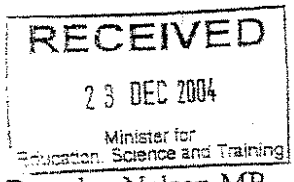
I have written in similar terms to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and copied this letter to the Treasurer, the Minister for Finance and Administration, and the Minister for Education, Science and Training.

Yours sincerely

John Howard

(John Howard)

(3)



The Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP
Minister for Education, Science and Training
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

20 DEC 2004

My dear Minister

I am writing regarding the travel subsidy programmes, administered by your portfolio and the Parliamentary Education Office, which assist school groups to visit Canberra.

I would like you to discuss with the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives closer coordination in the provision of the travel subsidy and, if appropriate, amalgamation of the Education Travel Rebate programme with the Citizenship Visits Programme, a programme operated by the Parliamentary Education Office.

On 18 November 2004 the Presiding Officers wrote to me seeking additional funds for the Citizenship Visits Programme (copy of letter attached). I have agreed to additional funds of $0.1 million in 2004-05.

There may be merit in the longer term of a single travel subsidy programme operated from your portfolio as part of civics and citizenship education. You should write to me with your assessment of the potential for closer coordination or amalgamation including a detailed proposal, if appropriate, by the end of February 2005 for consideration in the 2005-06 Budget process.

A copy of this letter has been provided to the Treasurer and the Minister for Finance and Administration.

Yours sincerely

John Howard

(John Howard)