

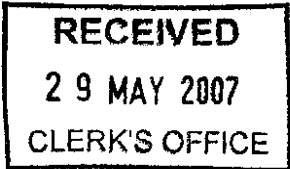


**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Science and Training**

Secretary

Lisa Paul PSM



Mr Harry Evans  
Clerk of the Senate  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Evans

Thank you for your letter dated 22 May 2006, regarding usage of the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) which has been operating since 1 July 2006. You asked for a response before DEST's Senate Estimates Hearing.

Attached to this letter is a table showing the PACER payments made to date in this financial year. As requested, it includes the number of schools and the number of students, broken down by state. Information on the use of PACER is provided to each meeting of the PACER Advisory Committee, on which Parliament House is represented by the Serjeant-at-Arms office. At the last meeting, Ms Claressa Surtees and Ms Stephanie Mikac attended.

We expect that there will be full expenditure of the rebate funds this financial year. At this stage, all schools that have applied for PACER and met the eligibility requirements have been accommodated.

You have requested information about the number of students who receive PACER who participated in the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) programme, or took a guided tour of Parliament House, or both. In order to be eligible for PACER, all students must visit Parliament House, Old Parliament House and the Australian War Memorial.

The institutions report that there has been an overall increase in the numbers of schools travelling to Canberra since the introduction of PACER and the capacity of the educational programmes at the institutions to accommodate the increased numbers has been a concern. The wording of "wherever possible" was included in the guidelines to ensure that those schools which had secured bookings for the education programme at two of the three mandatory institutions, but were unable to secure a booking for the education programme at the third institution, were not disadvantaged. At Parliament House, if a school is not able to secure a booking to the PEO, they should undertake a guided tour. The Advisory Committee has discussed this issue at all of its meetings and is monitoring the concerns about capacity of the PEO to cope with the increased interest in the programme.

DEST has been collecting statistics on visits to the PEO since the transition period concluded and information will be aggregated at the end of this financial year. Advice on this will be provided to the Advisory Committee.

At the last Advisory Committee meeting, the issue of representation from Parliament House was discussed and I was advised that there was regular contact between the Serjeant-at-Arms office and the PEO. However, if you believe that the PEO should be represented in its own right, I would be pleased to increase the membership of the Advisory Committee to include representation from the PEO.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'LP' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Lisa Paul

29 May 2007

**Table 1: Number of schools and students who have received PACER in 2006-2007  
Broken down by state – at 29 May 2007.**

**PACER payments in 2006-2007**

<b>State</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Schools</b>
NSW	28,242	512
NT	179	8
Qld	10,316	209
SA	2,639	83
Tas	578	17
Vic	9,814	193
WA	2,203	72
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,971</b>	<b>1,094</b>