



Minister for Education; Tourism; Women's Interests

28-00285-D08/0303422



Ms Claire Moore MP
Australian Senate Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Moore

Thank you for your letter dated 13 October regarding the inquiry into *Social Security and Veterans' Entitlements Legislation Amendment (Schooling Requirements) Bill 2008*.

In anticipation of the Bill being passed through parliament, broader consultation has occurred between the Department, Commonwealth and various stakeholders. The Government of Western Australia gives, in principle, support to the Bill and the implications this will have on the *Student Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM)* trial in Cannington, Western Australia.

Department of Education and Training schools operate in accordance with the *School Education Act 1999* (the Act) which legislates the compulsory nature of enrolment and attendance. Children in Western Australia are required to be enrolled and attend an education program from the beginning of the year the child reaches 6 years and 6 months to the end of the year they turn 17. Students are required to attend or be engaged in an education-based activity during school hours.

Department of Education and Training schools are mandated to follow procedures outlined in the *Enrolment and Attendance* policies. The *Attendance* policy outlines the procedures for schools to follow with respect to recording, monitoring and intervention where there are attendance concerns.

Schools are required to work with students and their families to put in place strategies to restore attendance when it falls below 90%. Where additional support is required to ensure compliance with enrolment and attendance, schools may seek support from an attendance officer. There is an officer in each of the 14 district education offices around the State.

Schools may also refer students to district attendance panels. These panels are comprised of community representatives who provide advice and assistance to families on their obligations under the Act. The panels also make recommendations to the school and the family to support re-establishing the student's regular attendance.

Where parents and students fail to address the recommendations of the panel, there is ongoing non-compliance and all supportive options for engagement have been exhausted, the Department may pursue legal action under the Act. Prosecution is seen as a last resort by the Department of Education and Training.

I encourage you to make contact with the Department of Education and Training requesting feedback on the operational impact of this Bill through its involvement in the SEAM trial.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this Bill.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Constable', written in a cursive style.

Dr Elizabeth Constable MLA
**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION; TOURISM;
WOMEN'S INTERESTS**

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