

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS  
COMMUNITIES**

**22 MAY 2009**



**AGENDA ITEM: NTARIA (A): POST PRIMARY AGE RESOURCING**

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE QUERY:**

- a) On the committee's visit to Ntaria the committee observed that greater resources, including infrastructure and staffing, was required for the increase in post primary age students now attending school. Does the NT government plan to provide additional facilities at the school to cater for secondary students?

**NT BACKGROUND:**

- DET has a ten year infrastructure plan which has identified the need for ongoing investment in remote schools and in particular, the infrastructure gap in the 22 towns.
- Future investment for Ntaria, as one of the 22 towns, would be targeted under the ten year plan to upgrade older parts of the school and provide broader amenities for students such as a new playing field and sports pavilion.
- In addition, extensive effort is being made to align all investment in very remote infrastructure including the Remote Service Delivery National Partnership and Building the Education Revolution
- As none of the above-mentioned investments has been finalised (either as an approved Cabinet Submission or signed National Partnership Agreement), it is not considered appropriate to include them in the response to the Senate Inquiry at this stage.

**SPEAKING POINTS:**

- The most significant initiative that outlines the NT's future direction and intentions to upgrade the remote schools is Closing the Gap. This included:
  - \$6 million for classrooms,
  - \$10 million for homeland upgrades or new schools and
  - \$20 million to to upgrade 15 Community Education Centres (or large community schools) over 4 years. This unfortunately did not include Ntaria.
  - \$1.2 million for Counselling offices
  - \$43 million was committed for government employee housing (all employees including teachers) over four years. This funding goes to Dept Local Government and Housing.

- The additional classrooms and teacher housing within the NT Emergency Response is being aligned with all other infrastructure effort.
- Full detail of the recent and future Ntaria infrastructure investment is provided below:

<b>NTARIA SCHOOL</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Status</b>
Three classrooms provided since July 2008 as a priority from the NTER funding for supplementary initiatives.	\$1.2 million	Completed
Various minor works including connecting paths, and a shed	\$53k	Completed
Installation of Relocatable ablutions facility	\$46K	Completed
Acoustic treatment to primary classrooms	\$100k	In progress by public tender
Capital Works item to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the home economics area and;</li> <li>• Expand the administration area and staff room;</li> <li>• Comprises \$401k NT and \$100k AG funding.</li> </ul>	\$501 091	Approved by Minister and awaiting approval from Treasurer
Primary school building covered outdoor learning area extensions to classrooms.	\$125k	Application in Round 2 BER funding. Decision expected late May.
Demolish older building and build new pre school.	\$2 million	Application in progress for Round 2 BER funding. Decision expected early June.
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Science Learning Centre. Note that this is a competitive bid process.	\$1.9 million	Will submit funding application as part of the NT bid. Decision expected August.

- With regard to necessary increases in staffing, post primary students attract higher staff allocations as indicated in the (d) brief.

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**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS  
COMMUNITIES**

**22 MAY 2009**

**AGENDA ITEM: NTARIA (B): CLOSURE OF TWO NTARIA HOMELAND LEARNING  
CENTRES**

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE QUERY:**

b) The committee was advised that two outstation schools near Ntaria have closed. What is being done to make sure that children living at these outstations are now going to school in Ntaria and are there any transport services available?

**NT BACKGROUND:**

- There were two Homeland Centres operating out of Ntaria in 2004.

**SPEAKING POINTS:**

- Kulpitara was closed in 2006 after a 6 month period where no students had presented for school. This was after 3 years of very low enrolments and attendance - less than the required 8 students within the Homeland Centre Operational Guidelines and Schools Management Handbook.
- Red Sandhill closed in 2007 due to declining enrolments and changes to the management of the school.
- Previously students living in Ntaria were being transported out each day to prop up the enrolments and attendance numbers. Once this practice ceased numbers declined rapidly and the homeland was subsequently closed.
- No recent survey has been undertaken to ascertain if numbers have changed and no requests have come from the homeland centres to reopen.
- Red Sandhill is a 5 minute drive from Ntaria so a bus service could be implemented if required.
- Kulpitara is a different matter and would need some commitment from the community if in fact they have returned. To the best of DET's knowledge, Kulpitara has been deserted for the last 5 years or used as a holiday arrangement by the Traditional Owners - not as a permanent base.

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**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

**22 MAY 2009**

**AGENDA ITEM: NTARIA (C): NTG POLICY ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE QUERY:**

c) What is the NT government's policy on bilingual education in Northern Territory schools?

**NT BACKGROUND:**

- In October 2008, the then Minister for Education and Training announced that the first four hours in each school day would be taught in English in all schools across the Northern Territory.
- This announcement followed concern that students in very remote NT schools were not achieving adequate English literacy and numeracy outcomes as a foundation for successful life pathways.
- The nine bilingual schools are most directly affected by the new policy.
- In all cases, schools are being supported by DET, through their schools manager, to plan and implement changes to comply with this requirement. Following the initial announcement the then Minister indicated that 2009 would be a time of transition but with the expectation that there was clear progress on implementing this policy change.
- In Central Australia, changes are being made in three schools to support implementation of the new policy. At Willowra School and Yuendumu School, English only programs are being delivered with first language support in Warlpiri for junior classes to ensure students understand the content being delivered. Areyonga School has commenced work on the development of a suitable oral English program and support structure to enable English delivery by local language speaking teachers. The school is receiving assistance from Lasseter Group School staff to manage the transition.
- In the Katherine region, Lajamanu School has commenced implementation of its plan using, for literacy, First Steps, Reading Recovery and Lexia and for numeracy, Quicksmart and Count Me in Too. The principal is working in partnership with DET to implement a whole school numeracy approach.
- In the Arnhem region five schools are affected by the change and all are working closely with DET to access support in order to adapt to the new arrangements during the 2009 school year. Milingimbi School, Shepherdson College and Numbulwar School have commenced delivery of English programs for the first four hours of the school day. Yirrkala School and Maningrida School are in the process of developing plans; however these are still in the early stages of development.

- At a meeting in February 2009 between the former Minister for Education and Training, DET senior officers, and Yirrkala community a range of strategies were agreed to maintain the use of local Indigenous language and culture in the school's program. A new principal commenced at the school in Term 2 2009. She is working with staff and the community to transition the school to adhere to the new policy arrangements.
- DET has released a policy which mandates the compulsory teaching in English for the first four hours of each school day.

### **SPEAKING POINTS:**

- The ability to read and write and to be numerate is the foundation for all school learning. Good English literacy and numeracy skills are critical if young people are to complete their schooling successfully. These skills are also required if they are to participate fully in the economic and social development of the NT and the nation.
- The Minister's direction does not mean that the first four hours of each school day are to be spent solely on teaching the subject English. Rather, it means that teaching and learning programs are to be conducted in English for the first four hours of each school day, and may encompass instruction in a range of learning areas, e.g. science, mathematics, health education as well as English. The direction does not preclude the use of a student's first language to scaffold learning in English.
- The provision of an environment at school where students receive sustained exposure to Standard Australian English supports the development of proficiency in English literacy and enhance numeracy skills. Students in remote and very remote communities need increased opportunities to learn and practise their English literacy skills. Four hours of instruction in English each school day will give them these opportunities.
- It is accepted that it may be necessary for schools to provide some translation of terms and concepts to assist students, particularly those in the early years of schooling who do not have English as their first language, in their English language learning. However, the focus for instruction in the first four hours of each school day is to be modeling, scaffolding and encouraging students to use Standard Australian English and includes a focus on the explicit teaching of Standard Australian English.
- Schools can timetable the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and culture during afternoon sessions, and are encouraged to do so. Indigenous Languages and Culture is a key element of the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF) and its implementation in NT schools is supported by DET officers. The opportunity to study Australian Languages is available to senior secondary students through the Northern Territory Certificate of Education (NTCE).

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## **POLICY**

### **COMPULSORY TEACHING IN ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST FOUR HOURS OF EACH SCHOOL DAY**

Responsibility of: Schools Policy and Operations  
Effective Date: January 2009  
Next Review Date: January 2011

DET File: 2008/2492  
DOC2009/00508  
VERSION NUMBER: 1

#### **1 POLICY**

Teaching and learning programs in Northern Territory (NT) schools are to be conducted in English for the first four hours of each school day, in order to improve literacy and numeracy results, particularly for Indigenous students.

The teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and culture may be scheduled during afternoon sessions.

Each school, in conjunction with its school council, will ensure that its school timetable addresses this requirement.

The requirement is subject to a common sense interpretation to allow for the timetabling of morning classes for Languages Other Than English (LOTE) in secondary schools and colleges.

#### **2 BUSINESS NEED**

In October 2008, the Minister for Education and Training directed that, as of 2009 all NT students are to undertake their teaching and learning programs in English for the first four hours of every school day. This decision was made in response to an identified need to make improvements in literacy and numeracy for all NT students, in particular the results being achieved by Indigenous students.

The ability to read and write and to be numerate is the foundation for all school learning. Good literacy and numeracy skills are critical if young people are to complete their schooling successfully. These skills are also required if they are to participate fully in the economic and social development of the NT and the nation.

Despite substantial investment by the NT and Australian governments in supporting the improvement of literacy and numeracy skills for students, and the genuine effort of Department of Education and Training (DET) staff over many years to improve results, there has been no significant improvement in NT students' literacy and numeracy outcomes.

## GUIDELINE

### COMPULSORY TEACHING IN ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST FOUR HOURS OF EACH SCHOOL DAY

Responsibility of: Schools Policy and Operations  
Effective Date: January 2009  
Next Review Date: January 2011

DET File: 2008/249Z  
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#### 1 INTRODUCTION

The provision of an environment at school where English is used regularly in a variety of ways will support the development of proficiency in English literacy and enhance numeracy skills. Students in remote and very remote communities need increased opportunities to learn and practise their English literacy skills. Four hours of instruction in English each school day will give them these opportunities.

This guideline has been developed to support implementation of the Teaching in English for the First Four Hours of Each School Day policy.

#### 2 SCOPE

It may be necessary for schools to provide some translation of terms and concepts required to assist students' understandings, particularly in the early years of schooling, in areas where English is not the first language of students. However, the focus for instruction in the first four hours of each school day is to be modeling, scaffolding and encouraging students to use Standard Australian English.

This policy is in addition to the existing requirements for schools to:

- design learning programs that are working towards meeting outcomes in English or English as a Second Language (ESL) as defined in the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework (NTCF)
- identify literacy and numeracy targets and the programs and resources that will be used to meet these targets in the short and longer term in their Annual Operational Plans and their four year Strategic Improvement Plans, under the Accountability and Performance Improvement Framework (APIF)
- provide at least two hours of English oracy, literacy and numeracy instruction each school day.

The currently endorsed and supported literacy approaches include Accelerated Literacy, First Steps and Stepping Out, Quick Smart Literacy and Walking Talking Texts. Endorsed and supported numeracy approaches include Quick Smart Numeracy and Count Me in Too.

### 3 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Principals

Principals are responsible for:

- working together with school councils to ensure the school timetable complies with this policy
- ensuring teachers, Assistant Teachers and other support staff have access to appropriate training or professional development to enable them to operate effectively in 'English only' classrooms
- negotiating for permission to vary the school timetable from time to time to accommodate special circumstances, e.g. a cultural excursion,

#### Schools managers

Schools managers are responsible for

- providing advice to schools and school councils on the design of timetables that meet this requirement
- brokering of appropriate support (e.g. ESL and/or cross-cultural effectiveness training) for teachers and classroom support staff
- ratifying school timetables to ensure they meet the requirements of this policy.

#### General Manager Teaching Learning & Standards

The General Manager Teaching, Learning and Standards is responsible for:

- the development of suitable curriculum materials that assist schools in implementing this policy effectively
- responding to requests from schools managers to provide professional learning support for teachers and support staff, to assist in the effective implementation of this policy.

#### Executive Directors

The Executive Directors North and Central Australia are responsible for the effective implementation and monitoring of this policy in their regions.

### 4 DEFINITION

This direction should *not* be interpreted to mean that the first four hours of each school day are to be spent solely on teaching the subject English. Teaching and learning programs are to be conducted *in* English for the first four hours of each school day, and may encompass instruction in a range of learning areas, e.g. science, mathematics, health education as well as English.

### 5 RELATED POLICIES

English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy

Length of School Day

Requirement to Provide Instruction for the Full School Year

Physical Activity Requirements for Schools

### 6 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Memorandum 2008/2527–MRS of 14 October 2008 from the Minister for Education and Training



**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

**22 MAY 2009**

**AGENDA ITEM: NTARIA (D): TEACHER/STUDENT RATIOS FOR REMOTE SCHOOLS**

**SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE QUERY:**

d) What is the student/teacher ratio for remote schools and does this ratio take account of the ESL (English as a second language) needs of many students?

**NT BACKGROUND:**

- The NT is in the final stages of preparing a Cabinet Submission on student-based staffing allocation system for introduction in 2010. This approach provides for substantial increases in allocations to schools with high proportions of ESL learners. As this has not yet been considered by Cabinet, it is not appropriate to include this in the response to the Senate Inquiry at this stage.

**SPEAKING POINTS:**

- The student teacher ratio for remote schools is the same as for urban schools
  - 22:1 Years T-6
  - 17:1 Years 7-9
  - 14:1 Years 10-12.
- The ratio used does not take into account ESL needs however in remote schools Assistant Teachers are allocated to primary classes on the basis of 1:22 students to assist the teacher.
- Large remote schools are allocated specialist ESL teacher positions based on student achievement data against ESL scales.
- An additional 170 teachers funded under the NT Emergency Response 200 teachers measure are progressively being allocated across the 73 prescribed communities in response to increased enrolments with a view to decreasing the student/teacher ratio to 10:1 where infrastructure, including teacher housing, permits.
- In smaller schools a Curriculum Access factor is applied which generates extra teaching staff.

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SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGIONAL AND REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

22 MAY 2009

AGENDA ITEM: NTARIA (E): OUTSTATIONS REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

SENATE SELECT COMMITTEE QUERY:

- e) The committee would like to confirm whether housing repairs and maintenance on outstations is the responsibility of the NT government. If so what is the basis on which you allocate funding for repairs and maintenance?

NT BACKGROUND:

- The following is from the NT Government Outstation Policy Discussion Paper released in late 2008:

*Historically housing constructed on outstations has been funded by government and ongoing repairs and maintenance has been funded in part through government grant programs. As housing in major communities moves to a public housing model a key issue with respect to outstations is the future status of outstation housing.*

*In 2008-09, as an interim measure pending agreement on arrangements for subsequent years, Territory Housing will provide funding to Shires and outstation resource agencies for outstation housing management and maintenance.*

- Inter-governmental liaison is currently very active in relation to Utopia Homelands including:
  - A meeting called by the Australian Government on Wednesday 13 May to discuss concerns and how these may be addressed consistent with Government policy in relation to outstations, remote service and housing delivery.
  - Correspondence from Leon Morris (DCM) indicated that the key issue is housing conditions (although the inter-relationship with housing and other service delivery – including mobility issues - is an important part of the picture) and that the NTG is operating according to the hierarchy of housing investment agreed in the Sept 2007 MoU (ie no new housing on outstations). The Outstations policy position is that housing is a private responsibility, but Government will provide some assistance for Repairs and Maintenance
  - There is a meeting on Friday 22 which Paul Newman and Randall Cook will be attending to work through the data and service delivery issues with key officers from both governments.

**SPEAKING POINTS:**

- Research to date indicates that the NT Government ***does not accept responsibility*** for repairs and maintenance of houses in Outstations and Homelands.
- NT Government does however currently contribute to maintenance and management of houses on Outstations or Homelands through grants to Shires and Outstation Resource Agencies (ORAs) who act as Indigenous Community Housing Organisations (ICHORs).
- The basis for grants is the old IHANT methodology which is \$500 per house for management and \$2125 per house for maintenance annually.
- This is managed through Territory Housing. In the case of Ntaria the ORA is Tjuwanpa Outstation Resource Centre.
- Tjuwanpa supports 42 outstations with 141 houses and in 08/09 received \$236K for housing maintenance and \$70.5K for housing management.
- It is expected that Tjuwanpa will receive a similar amount in the 09/10 financial year but beyond that will be dependent on the NT Government Outstation Policy that is currently being developed.

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