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STATES GRANTS (SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE) BILL 1982

Date Introduced:	23 September 1982
House:	House of Representatives
Presented by:	Hon Wal. Fife, M.P., Minister representing the Minister for Education

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To provide legilsative authority for 1983 Commonwealth payments to the States and the Northern Territory for government and non-government schools.

To provide for additional funds for 1982 programs necessitated by teacher salary increases.

Background

The Commonwealth provides grants to the States and the Northern Territory for programs administered by the Commonwealth Schools Commission. In February 1982, the Commonwealth Schools Commission presented its report to the Minister for Education outlining its recommendations for the funding of programs in 1983 in government and non-government schools. The Minister, in response to these recommendations, issued the Government's Guidelines in June 1982 which were subsequently revised in August 1982. In the same month, the Commonwealth Schools Commission reported its recommended financial allocations for 1983 in accordance with the revised Government Guidelines. The Government has accepted all of the Commission's recommendations and provides for them in this Bill.

In his Second Reading Speech, the Minister stated that the overall level of Commonwealth expenditure on school programs in 1983 would be about $1241 million, an increase of 3.9 per cent in real terms over 1982 (all amounts being in 1983 outturn prices). This figure includes $1.9 million for the A.C.T. which is not provided for by this Bill.

The following is a summary of the proposed expenditure for 1983.

	1983 (calendar year)
Government Schools	$ million
Recurrent	423.9
Capital	143.5
Total	567.4
Non-Government Schools	
Recurrent	576.0
Capital	51.0
Total	627.4
Joint Programs	46.0
TOTAL	1240.8

(Note: $1.9 million for the ACT is included)

In the government school sector, the Government will maintain the real level of capital grants in 1983, and general recurrent grants will be increased by 2 per cent in real terms. Recurrent resource standards for government schools, on average, are in excess of the targets set by the Interim Schools Commission in 1972.

Total recurrent grants to non-government schools are estimated to increase by 23 per cent in 1983 compared with 1982. The level of assistance for the base capital program for non-government schools will remain constant in real terms.

Grants for the Severely Handicapped Children's Program have been increased by 25 per cent and the program has been extended to include handicapped children of below school age.

Main Provisions

The Bill provides for the continuation of the same programs that have operated under the **State Grants (Schools Assistance) Act** 1981, with some modifications. Clause 3, sub-clause (1) interprets terms used in the Bill. "Special education" now includes such education for handicapped children of below school age. Clause 5 provides a maximum per capita grant of $880 for new arrivals participating in English as a Second Language Program in 1983.

Clause 6, sub-clause (4) provides that prior to the granting of funds to a State for the Capital Grants Program for government schools, the Commonwealth Minister must be satisfied with arrangments to identify projects to which Commonwealth funds are to be used.

Schedules 1 to 11 of the bill provide funds for programs for the States and the Northern Territory for 1983.

Part VI and Schedule 12 adjust grants for current programs for calendar year 1982 to help meet extra costs incurred by increases in teacher salaries.

For further information, if required, contact:

Education and Welfare Group
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

6 October 1982