

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2008-09**

Outcome **2**

DEEWR Question No. EW1128_09

Senator Mason asked on 25 February 2009, DEEWR Hansard page 83.

Question

Investing in our Schools Program

Did the Investing In Our Schools (IOSP) guidelines refer to a requirement for members of conservative political parties to officiate at opening ceremonies? Can you provide the previous wording?

Answer

Since its inception the IOSP guidelines have required schools to invite the Minister for Education to officiate at all opening ceremonies as the Australian Government representative. In circumstances where the Minister is unavailable he/she may delegate a representative to officiate on his/her behalf.

The initial 2005 IOSP guidelines stated:

56. *Funding recipients are required to give appropriate recognition of assistance from the Australian Government. These include:*
- (a) Acknowledging Australian Government assistance in publicity issued by the school in regards to the project.*
 - (b) conducting an official opening or ceremony to mark the completion of the project (unless an exemption is granted by the Minister). The Australian Government Minister should be invited to the ceremony and a convenient date for the ceremony for all parties should be chosen. It will usually be a representative of the Minister that attends the ceremony.*
 - (c) In larger, permanent infrastructure projects (such as new classrooms, shade infrastructure or play equipment), a small plaque acknowledging Australian Government assistance should be erected. The Schools Liaison Officer in the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education, Science and Training should be contacted for guidance on the wording. (Telephone (02) 6277 2082).*

The first internet content on IOSP referred stakeholders to the Guidelines for assistance on recognition requirements.

In 2006 and 2007 the guidelines were updated to include further information to schools on the facilitation of recognition. Each version required schools to invite the Minister to their respective ceremonies. The 2007 IOSP guidelines (most recent) state:

- Schools must hold recognition ceremonies as part of their conditions of funding.*
- a) The Minister must be invited to all opening ceremonies;*

- b) A convenient date for the ceremony for all parties should be chosen. Schools are required to choose three dates to allow greater flexibility for the Minister or representative to attend;*
- c) Ceremonies should not be scheduled on Parliamentary sitting days;*
- d) For assistance with organising an official opening, contact the DEST Hotline on 1300 363 079 to arrange the Australian Government's participation;*
- e) Provide the Minister with at least two months notice of any openings and public events relating to the projects;*
- f) Hold an official opening or ceremony within seven months of the completion of the project, unless otherwise agreed by the Minister; and*
- g) Make provision in the official proceedings for the Minister or representative to speak.*

Once it is established that the Minister or representative is to open a facility, this arrangement cannot be changed without the Australian Government's agreement.