

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW1202_12

Senator Mason asked on 16 February 2012, Hansard page 57

Question

Boarding schools

Senator MASON: I have in front of me a press release from Jenny Macklin, the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and also Mr Cameron Dick, the Queensland Minister for Education and Industrial Relations. The media release talks about a new boarding school for Weipa in 2012. The progress in the Northern Territory makes me shudder. I am a bit concerned, given the lack of any development there, as to whether this will be equally redundant. The press release states: The Australian and Queensland government has announced a new residential boarding facility in Weipa, in Queensland's western Cape York, that will open in 2012, this year. It is a 120-bed residential campus and the Australian government is providing \$30 million to build the new facility, as well as \$2.5 million towards operational costs. It is expected to open in the first half of 2012. What can you tell the committee about that? Mr Goodwin: That facility was constructed by Minister Macklin's department in Weipa. It is a facility, not a boarding school. Senator MASON: It is not a boarding school? Mr Goodwin: That is my understanding. It is not a boarding school. Senator MASON: It states in the media release 'New boarding school for Weipa in 2012'. Mr Goodwin: I would have to refer you to FaHCSIA for detailed information. Ms Paul: I think we might take it on notice, unless you want to go next door. I am happy to take it on notice. Senator MASON: You can see my concern after what has happened in the Northern Territory. Ms Paul: Of course. Senator MASON: I have lost my confidence. Ms Paul: We will take it on notice and come back with what the detail is and the timeframe.

Answer

The Australian Government has committed \$30 million towards the construction of a 120 bed student accommodation facility in Weipa, far North Queensland, to be known as the Western Cape Residential College (WCRC). This initiative is being managed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and further questions should be directed to that department.