

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2012-2013

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0984_13

Senator Wright asked on 14 February 2013 , Hansard page 52

Question

Non-government school compliance audits

Senator WRIGHT: What percentage is that 150 schools per year? Ms Smith: I will just ask my colleagues. Mr Hehir: There are actually 2,600 nongovernment schools. It would five to six per cent of that, roughly. Ms Smith: Yes, that is right. Mr Hehir: It is six or maybe seven per cent. ... Senator WRIGHT: I guess that is what I am interested in—those where you have the random sample of the audit and then there may be concerns and further investigation required. Can you give me some sense of the numbers where that may be found for that six or seven per cent? Mr Hehir: I could take that on notice. Some of these investigations or processes actually run for some time, because we pay attention to the schools that we investigate for some period. I would like to just make sure that we have it on a per-year basis rather than trying to provide you with a figure. Senator WRIGHT: That would be acceptable to me, thank you. Also, I understand there would probably be a range of concerns. Of the numbers that have been taken further from just the basic compliance checks that you talked about, those where perhaps the investigation has been dealt with very simply by responding within a short period with one or two queries to those which are of more concern and more serious, could you indicate the level of the investigation that is undertaken? Ms Smith: Certainly. Mr Hehir: We can certainly look at that. Ms Paul: Correct me if I do not get this right, but my feeling is that when we come back to you it will be more in the tens and fewer, rather than in the hundreds, just to give you a sense of an order of magnitude.

Answer

In 2010, there were 2 major and 6 minor new cases examined. This represents 0.29 per cent of the 2723 non-government schools.

In 2011, there were 3 major and 5 minor new cases examined. This represents 0.29 per cent of the 2728 non-government schools.

In 2012, there were 8 major and 10 minor new cases examined. This represents 0.66 per cent of the 2720 non-government schools.

Major cases typically include allegations of misuse of Australian Government funding or have a major impact on the education of a large group of students. These cases typically include the use of an external auditor.

Minor cases typically include concerns relating to financial viability, unexpected small school closures or allegations of a minor breach of the *Schools Assistance Act 2008*. These cases are typically handled within the Department.

The small increase in major cases in 2012 is due to the examination of five schools that have a common controlling entity.