

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 2 – Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0411_13

Senator Scullion asked on 31 May 2012, Hansard page 45

Question

Garrthalala

Senator SCULLION: Otherwise you can take them on notice as is the normal process, Ms Paul. I understand my colleague Senator Mason asked some questions in regard to the three boarding schools. I know he would have comprehensively covered that, which he enjoys doing. I have just a couple of quick questions—you may be able to take them on notice. With reference to Garrthalala, I have asked you before about the rationale of the location—why it would be there—and I have talked about the challenges. Are you aware of an assessment done on north-east Arnhem Land about where that would go? Did you conduct an assessment of any type at that stage?

Mr Goodwin: Your question is about a study done of the East Arnhem Land area in relation to the boarding facility. There was a feasibility study completed. It was quite some time ago now.

Senator SCULLION: If you could provide it on notice that would be excellent

Answer

- The attached *Feasibility study into a student accommodation facility in East Arnhem Land* by KPMG was commissioned in 2010 to assist the Australian Government in its consideration of proposed locations for a student boarding facility in the East Arnhem region of the Northern Territory.
- KPMG assessed seven main options for locating the facility - close to one of each of the five Indigenous communities, in addition to a homeland and non-community location. The seven locations were Gulkula, Yirrkala community, Gapuwiyak community, Garrthalala homeland, Galiwinku community, Ramingining community and Milingimbi community.
- Consultations were made around a range of factors including safety, the support of the local communities, the potential economic and employment outcomes and access to suitable infrastructure.
- Of the seven proposed locations, three had identified actual proposed sites – Yirrkala, Ramingining and Garrthalala.
- Based on the KPMG analysis, Gulkula was the highest scoring location based primarily on education and employment factors, and availability of suitable infrastructure. However, during consultations it became apparent that the safety of student boarders, cultural benefits and the support of the local community carried significantly more weight than these other factors alone.

- The Government's extensive discussions and consultation in the region clearly demonstrated a high level of community buy-in and willingness to invest in the decision of placing the facility at Garrthalala.
- The Garrthalala community has a well documented commitment to education, and a strong desire to host the facility, building upon the small residential school program that it has been running successfully for homeland students for several years. It was this strong support from the local community for education, and the surrounding outstations, together with the secure environment, that led the Government to the decision to proceed with building the boarding facility in Garrthalala.
- The key to the siting of this facility is the provision of a safe and secure environment where students can learn free of negative social issues and influences. Based on the report, Garrthalala was clearly the site that offered the best safety and security.