

**Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

**QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015**

**Outcome: Schools and Youth**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000241**

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing

*Also refer to previous Question No. ED0237\_15*

***National School Chaplaincy Programme***

**Question**

With reference to a letter from the WA Education Minister, the Hon. Peter Collier MLC, to Senator Sterle from 12 February 2015. (see attachment for extract of letter).

In this letter the Western Australian Government indicates that the National School Chaplaincy Program Funded in 2015 was \$1.45 million less than the funding received in 2014 under the previous chaplaincy and welfare program. This is a reduction in funding of almost 20 per cent.

Also with reference to an article from the Canberra Times from 9 September 2014 ACT, SA urged to accept school chaplains, which states that the ACT would face an \$180,000 cut to the program:

“Ms Burch said she was also concerned the federal Government proposal would equate to a \$180,000 cut, funding only 47 ACT schools of the current 56 – meaning at least nine support staff would be left without jobs.”

- a. How was this reduction in funding determined for each jurisdiction? Was it simply a case of removing funding from the program where it previously went to supporting secular welfare workers? If this is the case, doesn't this unfairly penalise states like Victoria, where there were a high proportion of secular welfare workers under the previous program?
- b. Can the Department provide a list of every school in Australia, broken down by state, that received funding in 2014 under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program but will not receive funding in 2015 under the National School Chaplaincy Program; for those schools, provide the quantum of funding each received in 2014, the name of the service provider, and the sector of the school.
- c. Can the department also please provide a full list of all schools that are receiving funding under the program in 2015, including the service provider for each school, the quantum of funds allocated, the qualifications of the person employed and the state and sector of the school?
- d. Noting the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Program required the set up of state based panels to decide which schools receive funds. Can The Department advise how many schools applied for funding but did not receive it? Can you provide a list, by sector, for each state and territory of the unsuccessful schools?
- e. I also note the agreement has certain standards in relation to the qualifications and the behavior of chaplains. Will the department be made aware of any breaches or complaints? How many have been made?
- f. Is the department satisfied that every state and territory has processes in place to ensure compliance with these parts of the agreement? Can the department publish the relevant guidelines and processes for each state and territory?

## Answer

- a. Each state and territory's indicative National School Chaplaincy Programme funding amount was calculated based on the proportion of schools from that jurisdiction that participated in the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Programme (NSCSWP) as at 18 June 2014.
- b. Please see Department of Education Question No. ED0237\_15 for a list of schools participating in the NSCSWP as at 18 June 2014. The NSCSWP ended on 31 December 2014, and had no funding allocated beyond its scheduled end date. As such no school would have received funding in 2015 under the previous programme.

The National School Chaplaincy Programme is a new programme which came into effect on 1 January 2015. Every school was invited to participate in the National School Chaplaincy Programme with decisions about the selection of participating schools made in each state and territory by a cross sector panel consisting of government, Catholic and independent school representatives.

- c. Under the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Programme states and territories are responsible for delivering all aspects of the programme. This includes making decisions about the selection of participating schools, the appointment of service providers and the distribution of funds to participating schools.

States and territories are the owners of this information.

- d. This information is not required to be collected by the Australian Government under the terms and conditions of the Project Agreement.
- e. States and territories are responsible for managing any complaints that arise regarding the operation of the National School Chaplaincy Programme as part of their responsibility for delivering all aspects of the programme.

Under the NSCSWP, calls were taken by the department's call centre staff and most queries were actioned with the assistance of the department. Since the Williams v Commonwealth (No 2) decision the Commonwealth can no longer administer the programme. However, the department continued the telephone line as a backup measure through the transition phase to the new programme. Since November 2014 there have been nil phone calls.

If a complaint was to be received by the department call centre, the complainant would be referred to their relevant state or territory education authority.

The Department of Education and Training has not received advice from any state or territory that there is an issue with the complaints process.

As part of the milestone reporting under the Project Agreement, states and territories are required to confirm to the Government that they have appropriate processes to ensure that:

- (i) participation by schools and students is voluntary;
- (ii) chaplains may be from any faith;
- (iii) chaplains must:
  - a. not proselytise
  - b. respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs
  - c. comply with State and Territory laws and policies in relation to child protection matters
  - d. meet the NSCP's minimum qualification requirements.

The first milestone report is due to the Commonwealth by 31 December 2015.

- f. As part of their responsibility for delivering all aspects of the National School Chaplaincy Programme, each state and territory develops and maintains processes and guidelines for the operation of the programme as it applies in their respective jurisdictions.

Information of such processes and guidelines is available at the following websites:

<b>State</b>	<b>Website</b>
NSW	<a href="http://www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au/db_uploads/NSCP_-_NSW_Guidelines_and_Application_Form.pdf">www.cecsw.catholic.edu.au/db_uploads/NSCP_-_NSW_Guidelines_and_Application_Form.pdf</a>
VIC	<a href="http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/nscpchaplaincy.aspx">www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/Pages/nscpchaplaincy.aspx</a>
QLD	<a href="http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/chaplaincy-student-welfare.html">education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/chaplaincy-student-welfare.html</a>
WA	<a href="http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/wellbeing/school-chaplaincy-program/">http://det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/wellbeing/school-chaplaincy-program/</a>
SA	<a href="http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/portal/aboutdept.asp?group=aboutdept&amp;id=nscp">www.decd.sa.gov.au/portal/aboutdept.asp?group=aboutdept&amp;id=nscp</a>
TAS	<a href="http://www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Chaplaincy-Guidelines.pdf">www.education.tas.gov.au/documentcentre/Documents/Chaplaincy-Guidelines.pdf</a>
ACT	<a href="http://www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/guidance_and_counselling_service">www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/guidance_and_counselling_service</a>
NT	<a href="http://www.education.nt.gov.au/about-us/policies/documents/schools/chaplaincy-services-in-schools">www.education.nt.gov.au/about-us/policies/documents/schools/chaplaincy-services-in-schools</a>