

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016**

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000107

Schools Chaplains program (SQ15-000697)

Senator Lines, Sue provided in writing

Question

Extract from SQ15-000697 – “The NSCP commenced on 1 January 2015 and the Australian Government is not required to collect information on the number of chaplains being employed in participating schools under the terms and conditions of the Project Agreement for the National School Chaplaincy Programme.

- a. Does the Department no longer has direct oversight of the school chaplains program?
- b. Is this a consequence of the Williams High Court decision?
- c. In a practical and operational sense, is the program now run exclusively by the states?
- d. What information, if any, is collected about program operation and expenditure under the school chaplains program?
 - i. How many chaplains are there currently?
 - ii. What religions are they aligned with?
 - iii. Which schools have a federally funded chaplain – please provide a list.

Answer

- a. On 17 November 2014 the Australian Government reached agreement with all state and territory governments, whereby the National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP) would be funded by the Government and delivered by the states and territories.
- b. On 19 June 2014 in the Williams v the Commonwealth case, the High Court of Australia found that payments made by the Commonwealth under the National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program were beyond the constitutional authority of the Commonwealth. This decision limited the ability of the Commonwealth Government to administer and directly fund school chaplains. Accordingly in August 2014, the Government invited state and territory education ministers to participate in the new NSCP, where states and territories administer funding provided by the Commonwealth as they see fit.
- c. The NSCP is funded by the Government and delivered by the states and territories in accordance with NSCP Project Agreement.
- d. The NSCP Project Agreement Clause 9 (e) requires states and territories to provide the Government reports on the delivery of outputs and expenditure on the NSCP.
 - i. As previously advised (refer to SQ15-000697), this information is not held by the Government.
 - ii. This information is not held by the Government. Please note that the NSCP Project Agreement Clause 9c (ii) states that a chaplain may be from any faith.

- iii. States and territories are responsible for their list of participating schools. For lists of schools see:

Queensland

<http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy/chaplaincy-schools-funding-list.html>

Western Australia

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/studentssupport/behaviourandwellbeing/detcms/navigation/wellbeing/school-chaplaincy-program/>

For the remaining states and territories (Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria), the Department will request permission from these states and territories to provide the list of schools to the Senate Committee.