

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014–2015**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0219_15

Senator O'Neill provided in writing.

Question

School Chaplains and Welfare Officers program

In relation to the School Chaplains and Welfare Officers program, does the Department record complaints from schools or individuals about persons who have been engaged under the chaplains and welfare officers program? a. Does the department report these complaints to the Minister? b. How many complaints have there been in 2013-14? And for every year prior since 2007-08? How many related to chaplains as opposed to welfare officers? c. How does the department respond to these complaints? d. Has the department withdrawn, or been asked by a school to cease, funding for a chaplain/welfare officer program at a school as a result of complaints? e. If so, can the department advise of each such occasion, including date the complaint was made, date the Department ceased funding the program, whether it was a government or non government school, whether the program was a chaplain or welfare officer program, and what state or territory the school was in.

Answer

a. The Minister and/or the Parliamentary Secretary are informed of complaints of a serious nature, for example allegations of a breach of the code of conduct relating to a child safety matter.

b. The following tables provide the number of complaints received by the department in each calendar year for the former National School Chaplaincy Programme (NSCP—2007 to 2011) and the former NSCSWP (2012 to 19 June 2014):

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
NSCP	17	67	79	87	93	343

	2012	2013	2014	Total
NSCSWP	51	34	30	115

NSCP

Of the 343 complaints received under the NSCP, 179 related to a chaplain. Of these:

- 97 could not be substantiated
- 82 were substantiated.

The remaining 164 NSCP complaints did not relate to a chaplain (for example complaints about the administration or the operation of the NSCP).

NSCSWP

Of the 115 complaints received under the NSCSWP, 62 related to a chaplain and three related to a student welfare worker.

The remaining 50 NSCSWP complaints did not relate to a chaplain or student welfare worker (for example complaints about the administration or the operation of the NSCSWP).

c. The department's role in relation to complaints management was outlined in the former NSCSWP's guidelines.

d. The department has not withdrawn funding from a school as a direct consequence of a complaint.

e. Under the former NSCSWP, one school chose to withdraw from the program following a substantiated complaint. The details are as follows:

Date of Complaint	Date Funding Ceased	School Sector	Type of Worker	State or Territory
02/11/2012	15/03/2013	Government	Chaplain	NSW