

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. ED0318_15

Senator Collins asked on 4 June 2014, Hansard page 97

Question

Changes to National Education Reform Agreement (NERA) requirements

Mr Cook: Well, there are certain things that certainly the parties are now saying they want to change in relation to requirements around the NERA, the heads of agreement in relation to the act and the regulatory burden it places on them. They do not necessarily want to keep the agreements. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Are you able to summarise that information? I think it would be particularly useful for the select committee. Mr Cook: I have a summary that has been given to me in the last couple of days about the submissions that we have received. Not all states and territories have finalised their submission to us. But we certainly can do that. I have a two-page summary, actually. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: I think on the last occasion we asked you, there was very limited feedback. Mr Cook: That is right. We have now got 17 submissions in from the states and territories and other sectors—parent groups and principal groups. There are still some states and territories that have asked for an additional extension until next week or the week after. But we can certainly give you the flavour of what they are without any problems. I happy to take that on notice and provide that to you.

Answer

On 2 April 2014, the Minister for Education, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, wrote to key education stakeholders inviting submissions on the removal of the command and control features of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and *Australian Education Regulation 2013* (the Regulation).

Minister Pyne sought comments on where stakeholders perceive the Act or the Regulation afford an overreach of Commonwealth powers and involve unnecessary reporting to the Commonwealth in this regard and ways to streamline the administration of financial and general accountability processes.

The correspondence noted that reducing command and control features will not eliminate accountability for the expenditure of Commonwealth funds and that the legislation contains a range of accountability provisions that will continue to be important.

As at 20 June 2014, 17 submissions have been received from stakeholders (including, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory). Submissions from NSW, WA, SA and ACT are also expected.

Following the receipt of all submissions, the department will prepare issues papers to inform more detailed discussions at consultation sessions with peak stakeholders in August 2014.

Initial drafting of possible legislative amendments will occur later in 2014 for discussion with peak stakeholders as part of a third and final phase of consultations. This timeframe enables considered consultation by stakeholders and sufficient time to draft amendments with a view to tabling legislation in 2015.