

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

**Outcome: Agency: ACARA**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000338**

Senator Wright, Penny asked on 04 June 2015, Proof Hansard page 87

***ACARA: ceasing data collection***

#### **Question**

Senator WRIGHT: Those figures were previously provided for the three years that I said— 2009 to 2012. I

want to know whether ACARA has ceased collecting this data.

Mr Randall: I do recall a discussion here, but not so much the previous one. We do not collect it for the purposes of per student reporting for a particular year. We may have provided it to you in that form. I recall questioning here about the per student reporting for a particular year of capital expenditure. It does not make sense because of the different definitions and all the other things that happen. So I am happy to take that on notice. I recall that is probably the point there. You can generate a figure for capital expenditure per student per year, but it is a somewhat nonsensical figure because you have to take into account a whole range of things and over time. It depends on how the bills are done and things like that. If your question to me is why did we do it before and not this time, I am happy to take it on notice.

Senator WRIGHT: There are two questions, I suppose. The question I asked was whether ACARA has ceased collecting the data or receiving it. It sounds like that is not the case, from what you have just said. You still have the data. A second question is: in that case, why were you prepared to provide it earlier in relation to that period? If it would be helpful, I will refer to the note so you can go back to your question. I will put it in there so it is on the Hansard. It is QONEDO 575\_15.

#### **Answer**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has provided the following response:

Capital expenditure is incurred when a school spends money to buy or improve assets such as equipment, property or buildings. Capital expenditure supports infrastructure used over many years and can change significantly from year to year depending on the capital projects taking place at a particular school. The financial resources available to schools are directly influenced by the nature of the school (including its location and profile), its programs, its operations as well as the level of its enrolments.

Publishing capital expenditure data on a “per student” basis for a particular year is likely to be misleading as it implies that all capital expenditure is consumed and utilised that year. It is in fact consumed and utilised over a longer period of time benefitting students over many years rather than students enrolled in a given calendar year.

ACARA continues to collect capital expenditure data and report it on the *My School* website. The total capital expenditure data is collected and reported at the school level and not at the per student level.

ACARA initially released capital expenditure per student estimates through a question on notice following the October 2014 supplementary estimates hearing. However, upon further consideration, ACARA determined that providing the capital expenditure data at per student level may have been misleading. Therefore ACARA did not calculate and release per student capital expenditure data in the February Senate Estimates Question on Notice (Ref: EDSQ15-000118), consistent with not providing per student capital expenditure data on the *My School* website.