

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000504

Senator O'Neill, Deborah, provided in writing.

Schools funding and the Federation Green and White paper processes

Question

1. Can the Department advise if Commonwealth and State funding for schools has historically grown at a rate considerably higher than inflation?
2. Will school funding feature in the Federation Green and White paper process?
3. Will the states and territories be presented with possible options for alternative school funding models in the Green Paper?
4. Will the Green Paper canvass the option proposed in the Commission of Audit's recommendations, which proposed an alternative school funding model of "Transferring all policy and funding responsibility for government and non government schools to the States, with annual funding provided in three separate, non-transferrable pools - one each for government schools; Catholic systemic schools and independent schools".
5. Will this or a similar model be proposed in the Green Paper? Is this an option that is being considered or proposed by the Commonwealth?
6. Are you aware of what the non-government school sector had to say in response to this recommendation from the Commission of Audit? Have they agreed with or rejected this proposal?
7. What engagement has the Department had with state and territory departments with respect to the Federation Green/White Paper process?

Answer

1. Table 4A.7 of the Productivity Commission's 2015 *Report on Government Services* shows a 44.1 per cent increase in Commonwealth funding for all schools in real terms over the period 2003–04 to 2012–13 – refer Australian Government Specific Purpose Payments, excluding joint programmes (excluding capital grants).
2. to 5. The Green Paper canvasses the roles and responsibilities of different levels of government for education and proposed reform options including for school funding. The Government has released a working draft of the *Reform of the Federation Green Paper* at: <https://federation.dpvc.gov.au/publications/discussion-paper>
6. On 1 May 2014, the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) and Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) released responses to the National Commission of Audit report. These can be found at:
 - NCEC: http://www.ncec.catholic.edu.au/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=293&Itemid=53
 - ISCA: <http://isca.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Media-Release-010514.pdf>

7. The Reform of the Federation process has been led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). The Department of Education and Training has participated, with state and territory departments in consultation processes led by PM&C. Updates on timing and processes have also been discussed in the Education Council and the COAG Industry and Skills Council and their working groups. Department of Education and Training officials attend the working groups.