

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

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

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000511

Senator O'Neill, Deborah provided in writing

Also refer to previous Question No. SQ15-000052

Maths and science programme funding

Question

In relation to the Department's response to QON number SQ15-000052 which asked about committed and not committed project funding, can I ask you about the status of some specific programs:

- a. Science Partnerships – Scientists and Mathematics in Schools
- b. National Support For Active Teachers
- c. Science Connections
- d. Maths and Science Olympiads
- e. Australian Maths and Science Partnerships Program
- f. Improving the Quality of Maths and Science Teachers

1. Please outline how each of those programs is currently funded.
2. What is the duration of each funding program, when does each expire, please table copies of the funding agreements.
3. Are any of these programs under review, or are there any planned reviews for these programs?
4. Is there any provision in the Budget to continue funding for these programs on an ongoing basis?
5. Has, or will, funding for any of these programs cease to offset the cost of the \$12 million STEM commitment?

Answer

All funding agreements are attached.

a. Science Partnerships – Scientists and Mathematics in Schools (SMiS)

1. SMiS is funded from the Maths and Science Participation Programme.
2. A funding agreement with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) is in place for the period 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2016.
3. CSIRO has commissioned an independent evaluation of Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools, which is currently underway.
4. There is no provision in the Budget to continue funding for this programme on an ongoing basis.
5. No funding from this programme has, or will, cease in order to offset the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education initiatives announced in October 2014.

b. National Support for Active Teachers

1. National Support for Active Teachers is funded from the Maths and Science Participation Programme and is delivered through three funding agreements.
2. The details and duration of each agreement is as follows:
 - An agreement with the Australian Science Teachers Association for the period 2 October 2012 to 30 June 2016.
 - An agreement with the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers for the period 15 October 2012 to 30 June 2016.
 - An agreement with the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL). This arrangement exists as a component of a more extensive funding agreement with AITSL covering 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2015.
3. The programme is not currently under review, nor is a future review currently planned. The Australian Science Teachers Association and the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers are required to evaluate the project against the project objectives and include this in their final reports.
4. There is no provision in the Budget to continue funding for this programme on an ongoing basis.
5. No funding from this programme has, or will, cease in order to offset the STEM education initiatives announced in October 2014.

c. Science Connections

1. Science Connections is funded from the Maths and Science Participation Programme through two funding agreements with the Australian Academy of Science.
2. The current agreements are:
 - Primary Connections: Linking Science with Literacy for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018.
 - Science by Doing for the period 1 July 2013 to 31 May 2018 and is covered by an original funding agreement and a Deed of Variation.
3. An independent evaluation for each project will be conducted towards the end of the funding period.
4. Additional funding was provided to Science Connections in the 2014–15 Budget. Funding ceases in June 2018.
5. No funding from this programme has, or will, cease in order to offset the STEM education initiatives announced in October 2014.

d. Maths and Science Olympiads

1. The Maths and Science Olympiads are funded from the Maths and Science Participation Programme through two funding agreements.
2. One funding agreement is with Australian Science Innovations (for physics, biology and chemistry Olympiad programmes) and the second is with AMTT Ltd for the Australian Mathematics Trust (for mathematics and informatics Olympiad programmes). Both agreements are for the period 1 July /2013 to 31 July 2016.
3. The programme is not currently under review, nor is a future review currently planned.
4. There is no provision in the Budget to continue funding for this programme on an ongoing basis.
5. No funding from this programme has, or will, cease in order to offset the STEM education initiatives announced in October 2014.

e. Australian Maths and Science Partnerships Programme

1. A total of \$21.6 million was provided in the 2012–13 Budget for the Australian Maths and Science Partnerships Programme (AMSPP) over the period of 2013–2016.

Of the \$21.6 million, \$5.2 million has been expended on seven priority projects across six universities. This funding was allocated through a competitive allocation process. All milestone payments were made and all projects were completed in 2014. The remaining funding of \$16.4 million was approved on 24 June 2014 for a further 15 projects across ten universities as a result of the competitive grant round held in May–July 2013.

All AMSPP funding for 22 projects has been provided (under individual Conditions of Grant (CoG)) under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. The AMSPP funding is paid in calendar years as required under the Act.

A total of \$5.4 million was provided to fifteen AMSPP projects in the last quarter of 2014 in their first milestone payments (September–November 2014). Second milestone payments, totalling \$5.4 million, were made in May 2015. The third and last payments totalling \$5.6 million under the AMSPP CoGs will be made in May 2016.

Duration of current AMSPP funding in both calendar and financial years is as follows:

- In calendar years: from last quarter of 2014 to May 2016
- In financial years: from 2014–2015 to 2015–16.

The length of projects under the current AMSPP programme ranges from one to three years. Duration in both calendar and financial years is as follows:

- In calendar years: from last quarter of 2014 to June 2018
- In financial years: from 2014–2015 to 2017–18.

3. There is no planned review of the AMSPP programme.
4. There is no provision in the Budget to continue funding for the AMSPP programme on an ongoing basis.
5. No funding from this programme has, or will, cease in order to offset the STEM education initiatives announced in October 2014.

f. Improving the Quality of Maths and Science Teachers

1. The Improving the Quality of Maths and Science Teachers programme (promoted as the Enhancing the Training of Maths and Science Teachers programme) is a Quality Initiative under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

2. Programme funding is \$12 million over three calendar years, 2014 to 2016, and is provided by annual appropriations. Programme funding is fully committed.

Further information about the programme and projects is available at:
www.olt.gov.au/maths-and-science-teachers.

3. The programme is not under review, nor are there any planned reviews for these programmes.
4. There is no provision in the Budget to continue funding for this programme on an ongoing basis.
5. No funding from these programmes has, or will, cease in order to offset the STEM education initiatives announced in October 2014.