

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000696

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah asked on 01 June 2017, Proof Hansard page 97

Use of Commonwealth funding

Question

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: You are aware that is something that has been discussed in relation to rental arrangements?

Dr Bruniges: I think it was in the same—

Mr Cook: I think there was something in the media. Beyond that, nothing has come directly to the department other than what has been in the general media.

Senator HANSON-YOUNG: Should Commonwealth money that is put aside, which is allocated through your needs-based funding model, be being spent on renting property that is owned by a parish?

Mr Cook: I would have to take that on notice. I need to go into the detail. For the purposes of education, the issue that we have had with some of the schools is where the rental value has been markedly more than what it actually should be. That is what we have had with some other schools.

Answer

The Department of Education and Training conducts a range of assurance activities to ensure compliance with the requirements of the *Australian Education Act 2013* and the Australian Education Regulation 2013.

Recurrent funding under the Act is provided to approved authorities for schools, including Catholic education systems, other non-government systems and state and territory governments. This funding must be used for the purposes of school education. Section 29 of the Regulation sets out a non-exhaustive list of these purposes. This list includes general operating expenses of the school and maintenance of the school's land and buildings. An approved authority can use financial assistance received under the Act to pay rent, for the land and building use by a school, to a third party at no more than market value.

Approved authorities for schools are required to provide an annual acquittal certificate to the department certifying that funding received under the Act has been spent or committed to be spent for the purposes of school education.