

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0207_14

Senator Ruston asked on 20 November 2013, Hansard page 86

Question

Building the Education Revolution (BER) unspent and uncommitted money

Mr Zanderigo: \$15.8 billion has been spent and \$34.1 million has been committed to be spent. Senator RUSTON: There is still quite a considerable amount of money unspent and uncommitted. Ms Paul: Yes. Senator RUSTON: The question is if it is unspent and uncommitted and it is not used, what is going to happen to it? Mr Hehir: The process that state authorities are allowed to do is actually to work through and reconcile each of the individual projects. They are allowed to pay back funding that they contributed towards that. That is my understanding. If they have contributed funding and they have excess Australian government funds leftover, they are allowed to claim it back—that is, the Australian government funding against their funding. So there is still a process where we actually have to go through and have every skilled project acquitted. Senator RUSTON: What is the timeframe for that process? Mr Zanderigo: We will need to take that on notice.

Answer

Under the Building the Education Revolution (BER) programme, all completed projects must be financially acquitted. If unspent funds remain after acquittal, education authorities must return this amount to the Commonwealth.

As at 31 October 2013, 99 per cent of all BER projects are reported as financially acquitted.

There are three levels of the financial acquittal process – the project level, the element level and the programme level. Education authorities are required to acquit each level. Acquittal of projects continues to progress across each element of the BER programme and in jurisdictions where projects are yet to complete, the department expects the final acquittal of all parts of the programme will be approximately six months after the completion of the last project.