

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0553\_15**

**Senator O'Neill provided in writing.**

**Question**

**'Command and control' aspects of school funding**

In relation to the Government's review of 'command and control' aspects of school funding: a. How is the review being conducted? b. What is its reporting date? c. Who has been consulted? How many submissions have been received? Why aren't these submissions publicly available? Will they be made public? When? d. What are the terms of reference? e. What are the milestones and the expected completion dates for each milestone? f. What is the full list of organisations that have participated in the review, which organisations were invited to participate by Government or the Department? g. Please provide any correspondence from the Minister to stakeholders in relation to the review.

**Answer**

- a) The Australian Government is not undertaking a formal review of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act). In line with the Government's election commitment, the Hon Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education, wrote to key stakeholders inviting submissions on the command and control aspects of the Act.
- b) As this is not a formal review of the Act, there are no specific reporting dates.
- c) The following 33 organisations were invited by Minister Pyne to provide written submissions on the command and control aspects of the Act:
- New South Wales Government
  - Victorian Government
  - Queensland Government
  - Western Australian Government
  - South Australian Government
  - Tasmanian Government
  - Northern Territory Government
  - Australian Capital Territory Government
  - National Catholic Education Commission
  - Independent Schools Council of Australia
  - Christian Schools Australia
  - Lutheran Education Australia
  - Australian Association of Christian Schools
  - Australian Education Union
  - Australian Council of State School Organisations
  - Australian Parents Council

- Steiner Education Australia
- Montessori Australia Foundation
- Australian Primary Principals Association
- Australian Secondary Principals Association
- Children with Disabilities Australia
- Association of Heads of Independent Schools Australia
- National Independent Special Schools Association
- Anglican Schools Australia
- Australian Association of Special Education
- Independent Education Union of Australia
- Australian Council of Jewish Schools
- Australian Association of Distance Education Schools
- Independent Primary School Heads of Australia
- Catholic Secondary Principals Association
- Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association
- Australian Special Education Principals' Association
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Principals Association

24 written submissions were received as part of the consultation process. It is not intended that these be published. The department would need to contact each organisation to seek permission before considering release of these submissions. A number of organization specifically requested their submission not be made public.

- d) As this is not a formal review of the Act, there are no terms of reference.
- e) As this is not a formal review of the Act, there are no milestones.
- f) Please refer to answer c).
- g) The content of Minister Pyne's 2 April 2014 letter to stakeholders is at **Attachment A**.

## Attachment A

I refer to my letter of 14 January 2014 in which I outlined this Government's plans to support you to help all schools improve education outcomes.

In that letter I indicated that I would begin consultation on possible legislative amendments to reduce regulatory burden on schools and systems in 2014. Accordingly I write to invite submissions on the removal of the command and control features of the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) and *Australian Education Regulation 2013* (the Regulation).

I recognise that the Act and Regulation, as introduced in 2013, have features that intrude into how education authorities run their schools and require detailed reporting on this rather than focusing on outcomes for students. I acknowledge the key role of states and territories, non-government school systems and independent schools in the delivery of school education and would welcome your comments on where you perceive the Act or the Regulation afford an overreach of Commonwealth powers and involve unnecessary reporting to the Commonwealth in this regard. You may also wish to propose ways to streamline the administration of financial and general accountability processes.

Reducing command and control features will not eliminate accountability for the expenditure of Commonwealth funds. The legislation contains a range of accountability provisions that will continue to be important.

In addition to outlining any principles for consideration in reducing command and control, I ask that you identify specific sections of the legislation when preparing comments to enable my department to prepare a consolidated response that can be discussed in more detail at consultation sessions with peak stakeholders. The department contact on this matter is Mr Tony Zanderigo, on 02 6240 7793 or at [anthony.zanderigo@education.gov.au](mailto:anthony.zanderigo@education.gov.au). Please provide your submission directly to Mr Zanderigo by 9 May 2014.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement to work towards building a world-class education system based on lifting the quality of teaching, ensuring a robust national curriculum, expanding principal autonomy and engaging parents.

Yours sincerely

**Christopher Pyne MP**