

**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. ED0555\_15**

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

**Question**

**Review of the Australian Curriculum - appointment of Professor Spurr**

In relation to the appointment of Professor Barry Spurr as a subject reviewer on the review of the Australian Curriculum, can the Government advise: a. How were subject reviewers engaged by the Curriculum review engaged? b. Who approached Professor Spurr, and other subject reviewers, to be involved in the review? c. On which date and how was the Department advised of Professor Spurr's appointment or proposed appointment? d. Did the Department formally approve the appointment? e. Was the Minister's office advised of Professor Spurr's appointment before or after it occurred? If so, when, by whom, and in what format (was it in a brief, was it verbal etc)? f. Were subject reviewers paid? g. How much was Spurr paid? Was this part of the review budget? h. Was there any vetting process undertaken by the Department as to which subject experts were engaged for the review? i.

Could the Department, or the Minister, have vetoed the appointment of a subject reviewer? j. Did the Department provide any advice or recommendations to Kevin Donnelly and/or Ken Wiltshire as to suitable subject reviewers? k. Are the racist and sexist comments made by Professor Spurr consistent with his terms of engagement for the review? Are they consistent with APS conditions of employment? Are there any sanctions open to the department in relation to misbehavior of a person appointed in the way Professor Spurr was appointed? Are any disciplinary actions being pursued? If not, why not? l. Has the Department had any contact or dialogue with Professor Spurr since his offensive comments came to light? m. If so what was the nature of that contact? n. Has the Department had any contact with the Minister's office since these comments surfaced, regarding Professor Spurr's appointment? o. Does the Minister stand by the appointment of Professor Spurr?

**Answer**

- a) The subject matter specialists were selected by Professor Ken Wiltshire AO and Dr Kevin Donnelly and engaged by a contract with the department.
- b) Professor Wiltshire and Dr Donnelly approached Professor Barry Spurr and the other subject matter specialists to be involved in the review.
- c) The department was advised of Professor Spurr's selection to be a subject matter specialist by email on Monday 31 March.
- d) No

- e) The Hon Christopher Pyne MP, Minister for Education, was advised by Professor Wiltshire and Dr Donnelly by email on Friday 4 April 2014 following their selection of subject matter specialists.
- f) Yes.
- g) Professor Spurr was paid \$8250.00 (GST inclusive). The payments for the subject matter specialists were part of the initial budget allocation for the Review of the Australian Curriculum.
- h) No
- i) If there was a concern regarding a subject matter specialist the department would have been within its rights not to enter into a contractual arrangement with a subject matter specialist.
- j) Yes.
- k) Professor Spurr satisfied the terms of his contract. Professor Spurr was a contractor and not an APS employee and hence the APS Code of Conduct was not applicable.
- l) No.
- m) Not applicable.
- n) Yes
- o) The Minister did not appoint, nor was he consulted on the selection of, Professor Spurr, however he supports the integrity of the review and the recommendations.