

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates 24-28 February 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: School attendance

Senator: Senator Rachel Siewert

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Question:

1. I understand that in Aurukun only 25% of the Aurukun youth of high school age are attending school in Aurukun or elsewhere and that significantly better statistics on school attendance are being achieved in Bamaga without the special attention being given to Aurukun. How are these programs being assessed?
2. Is it possible that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in other locations in Cape York are being disadvantaged by this approach?

Answer:

The Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy (CYAAA) does not provide a high school programme in Aurukun. Many high school age children from Aurukun attend boarding schools. However, the Western Cape College does provide a high school programme for high school-age children in Aurukun.

The school at Bamaga is part of the Northern Area State College. The College consists of three campuses - Bamaga Senior Campus, Bamaga Junior Campus and Injinoo Junior Campus.

The primary school attendance rate at this school fell from 76.7 per cent in term 1 2008 to 70.9 per cent in term 1 2013. Over the same time period, the primary school attendance rate in Aurukun rose from 50.2 per cent to 69.7 per cent.

The Cape York Welfare Reform Evaluation included a detailed analysis of the additional funding provided. Care was taken to separate out the additional funding that resulted from the reforms. We are unaware of any similar analysis for Bamaga.