

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates Hearing 25-29 May 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: School attendance

Senator: Senator the Hon Jan McLucas

Question reference number: 318

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 10 July 2015

Number of pages: 2

Question:

Has the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) been reviewed?

- a. If so:
 - (i) Who conducted the review?
 - (ii) On what date was the review commenced?
 - (iii) On what date was the review completed?
 - (iv) Has a final report been received by Government?
 - (v) Will this report be publicly available?
 - (vi) What was the cost of the review?
- b. If not:
 - (i) Why has there been no review?
 - (ii) Is a review of the RSAS planned for the future? When?

Answer:

a. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) receives and analyses school attendance data for the RSAS schools every week and regularly monitors RSAS performance. Additional evaluative activities are also being conducted. The assessment has two parts:

- o Quantitative: this analysis includes a comparison of attendance trends in RSAS schools with trends in other remote schools.
 - o Qualitative: this analysis looks at the reasons why children did not go to school as reported in weekly RSAS reports. Six case studies with fieldwork will also be conducted to understand how the model is working in different contexts and what lessons can be learnt.
- (i) The quantitative assessment was conducted by the Information and Evaluation Branch, PM&C, in conjunction with RSAS jurisdictions. PM&C contracted O'Brien Rich Research Group to undertake the two qualitative studies.
 - (ii) The review commenced in January 2015.

- (iii) PM&C anticipate all elements will be complete by October 2015.
- (iv) Once the inputs are completed they will be provided to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs (the Minister) as a synthesis report. A separate report will be provided when case studies are complete.
- (v) The Minister will decide if the reports should be publicly released.
- (vi) The cost of the two-part assessment is as follows:
 - the Quantitative analysis has been funded via ongoing departmental funding;
 - the Qualitative analysis has required the contracting of external expertise, with a cost to-date of \$52,800 (GST inclusive) for qualitative data analysis and an anticipated maximum cost of \$141,767.00 (GST inclusive) for six case studies with remote fieldwork.