

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 20-24 October 2014

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: Outcome 1: Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Education

Senator: Senator the Hon Jan McLucas

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Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 5 December 2014

Number of pages: 2

Question:

1. Can the department confirm that the 200 additional Commonwealth funded teachers in the Northern Territory were funded under the CDEP and are now within the Indigenous Advancement Strategy or whether they are funded as part of the Stronger Futures package?
2. In May 2014 COAG agreed that the Commonwealth and states and territories, in partnership with communities, develop specific strategies by no later than 31 October 2014, to improve school attendance where the attendance rate for Indigenous children is below 80 per cent.
 - a. Term 1 2014 attendance figures for QLD and the NT – the only publicly available data by school – showed that none of the 21 schools attained 80 per cent attendance. Could you please detail the specific strategies that were developed for these schools and the consultation process?
 - b. Where are these strategies documented? Do they have performance benchmarks?
3. In May 2014 COAG further agreed to public reporting of school attendance information, recognising privacy issues, later in 2014, and then twice yearly from 2015 onwards.
 - a. When will the school attendance data be published this year?
 - b. As far as we are aware, only NT and QLD have authorised the publication of attendance data. What is the Commonwealth doing to ensure that reporting will be done for all states in accordance with the many promises this Government has made?
4. In October 2014 COAG agreed to work bilaterally with the states on more regular reporting of school attendance where there are significant attendance issues.
 - a. Are states currently required to report on a weekly basis?
 - b. Are all states compliant?

Answer:

1. The 200 additional Commonwealth funded teachers in the Northern Territory are funded as part of the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory National Partnership Agreement Schooling Implementation Plan.

2. a. and b. The publicly available data relates to Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) schools. The development and implementation of the strategies required under the COAG agreement are the responsibility of each jurisdiction. An update on these strategies will be provided as part of a report to COAG in early 2015.
3. a. Data on Indigenous and non-Indigenous school attendance rates is expected to be released in December 2014 for all schools in Australia subject to privacy provisions.

b. In addition to the answer provided under 3a from 2015 twice yearly reporting of school attendance rates for all schools in Australia for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students is expected to commence subject to privacy provisions. Data is also expected to be published in 2015 for each school on the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who attend school 90 per cent or more of the time. Bilateral discussions will also occur with states and territories on more regular reporting of school attendance.
4. a. Jurisdictions with RSAS schools are collaborating by providing unverified weekly attendance data to the Commonwealth to support weekly operational planning, on the condition that this data is not publicly released. All school attendance data remains the property of each relevant jurisdiction and it is up to each jurisdiction to approve the release of any data.

b. The Commonwealth receives unverified weekly attendance data for all jurisdictions with RSAS schools to support operational planning, on the condition that this data is not publicly released.