Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

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

Senator: Senator the Hon Jan McLucas
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Question:

Is there a prototype app for school attendance currently in development for Indigenous communities?
a.   What is the cost of the development?
b.   Is the department developing the app or has this work been contracted to a third party?

Answer:

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) is working on three separate school attendance technology projects.

1. The first of these projects has involved the trialling of phone text notification programmes to alert parents when their children are not at school. The technology was implemented on 30 November 2014 and was trialled during Semester One 2015, enabling a comparison with attendance during Semester One 2014.

a.   PM&C provided $120,000 funding to trial the technology in:

    o   two schools in the Northern Territory (Centralian Middle School and Tennant Creek High School); and

    o   three schools in Western Australia (Carnarvon Community College, Derby District High School and Roebourne District High School)

b.   PM&C funded the Western Australia Department of Education and the Northern Territory Department of Education $60,000 each to carry out this project.

2. The second project concerns the development of a 'Map app' in Wadeye. This application will assist in identifying student attendance patterns. After the morning roll is taken, the data are sent to the application which will then advise the school attendance team of students they need to follow up with, and their known address and parent/carer details.

a.   The cost of developing this application is $50,000.

b.   PM&C has contracted the Northern Territory Catholic Education Office to carry out the development and trial of this application.

3. PM&C has just commenced discussionS with the Northern Territory Government and Nhulunbuy High School to trial automated I-Pad/PC based attendance technology.

a.   No cost details are available at this time.

b.   A third party provider is developing the IT.