

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: IAS – Indigenous Consultative Bodies

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

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Type of question: Written

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Number of pages: 4

Question:

The following questions refer to the recent funding cut towards Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies.

1. What mechanisms have you put in place to determine the impact on student welfare and student outcomes that this decision is having?
 - a. What relevant records and data are you collecting, and where does this data come from?
 - b. What mechanisms do you have to understand Indigenous student needs moving forward?
 - c. What qualitative measure do you have to evaluate student outcomes?
2. How do you align this decision with the stated purposes of the IAS? Specifically, ‘Increased Indigenous school attendance and improved educational outcomes’?
3. Are you able to provide evidence of how the implementation of the IAS has improved student welfare and outcomes?
4. Do you have data that tracks the participation and transition rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children going through kindergarten/pre-school into formal schooling? Can you please provide this data?
5. How many year 12 Indigenous students completed year 12 in 2014, how many in 2015 and how many are enrolled and on track to finish in 2016?
6. What impact has this change had upon Higher Education and Training participation rates and student outcomes?
7. What level of community involvement will there be in Indigenous Education policy development moving forward?

Answer:

1a) The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) regularly tracks and analyses both school attendance and National Assessment Programme – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) data for Indigenous students.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) publish on MySchool school attendance data for each school in Australia annually for semester 1 and term 3 (split by Indigeneity). MySchool also publishes data on the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who attend school 90 per cent or more of the time.

NAPLAN assessments are undertaken nationwide, every year, in the second full week in May.

1b) PM&C meets regularly with jurisdictions and non-government school authorities who are responsible for the day to day delivery and management of Australia's schooling system.

PM&C consult with a range of stakeholders including peak organisations, education bodies, Commonwealth, state and territory agencies as well as key academics and research bodies, to develop an understanding of the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Australia.

1c) PM&C regularly discusses Indigenous student outcomes with state and territory education authorities who develop and deliver programmes directly to schools and with our counterparts in the Department of Education and Training.

2) Under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS), applications for funding are assessed based on expected contributions towards increased school attendance and improved education outcomes. Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies (IECBs) are welcome to apply.

PM&C is funding two IECBs to run specific service delivery activities to 2017-18.

- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated - \$875,000 for the delivery of training and resources for kindergartens and parents; and
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group – \$250,000 for the delivery of training and other support for teachers, students and parents.

However, PM&C considers state-based education authorities should support the core functions of IECBs, as they are responsible for the management and delivery of school education and directly benefit from the work of IECBs.

3) The Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) Interim Progress Report presents interim findings of the progress of RSAS including an assessment of its impact on school attendance. The report was released on 4th March 2016. It is available at:

<https://www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/remote-school-attendance-strategy-interim-progress-report>

A case study research for the Remote School Attendance Strategy authored by O'Brien Rich Research Group presents the findings of six case studies about how and why the Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS) is working in those sites.

<http://www.dpmc.gov.au/resource-centre/indigenous-affairs/case-study-research-remote-school-attendance-strategy>

Further data on trends in educational outcomes for Indigenous students are published in a range of reports, including the Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report (which is due to be released on 17 November) and the Prime Minister's annual Closing the Gap Report.

4) As schooling in Australia is compulsory all Australian children are expected to transition into formal schooling. Data on the participation of Indigenous children in early childhood education is collected by the ABS through the National Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Collection. The latest data is published in *Preschool Education, Australia, 2015* (cat. no. 4240.0)

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4240.0Main+Features12015?OpenDocument>

This is an annual collection, developed as part of the National Information Agreement (NIA) on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The activities covered by the NIA ECEC are intended to build a common, shared infrastructure to ensure nationally consistent ECEC data across jurisdictions.

5) Year 12 attainment data is sourced from the National Schools Statistics Collection (NSSC), which is a joint undertaking of state and territory departments of education, the Commonwealth Government Department of Education and Training, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and the Education Council.

Data for 2014 and 2015 is provided below, the data for 2016 is not yet available. Over the long-term there have been improvements in Year 7/8 to Year 12 retention rates for Indigenous students, up to 59 per cent in 2015 from 32 per cent in 1998.

Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Full-time Students in Year 12 of
Education

Number of students	2014	2015
Government Schools	5442	5881
Non-government Schools	1786	1977
Total	7228	7858
Apparent retention rate(a)	59.4	59.4

(a) Estimates the proportion of Year 7/8 students who have stayed at school until Year 12.

Source: *Schools, Australia, 2015* (cat. no. 4221.0)

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4221.0Main+Features392015?OpenDocument>

Another set of data that can be used to measure this is the number and proportion of 20-24 year olds who completed Year 12 or equivalent in the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS). This data is used to assess progress against the target to halve the gap in year 12 or equivalent attainment by 2020.

The latest available data for this target comes from the ABS National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey, 2014-15 (cat. no. 4714.0).

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4714.0Main+Features22014-15?OpenDocument>

Non-Indigenous data is available from the ABS 2014 Survey of Education and Work (SEW).

For the purposes of the target, an Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Certificate II is considered equivalent to Year 12 attainment. Nationally, the proportion of Indigenous 20-24 year-olds who had achieved a Year 12 or equivalent qualification increased from 45.4 per cent (20,200) in 2008 to 61.5 per cent (39,900) in 2014-15. For non-Indigenous Australians, the proportion did not change significantly from 85.0 per cent in 2008 to 86.4 per cent in 2014. Between 2008 and 2014-15, the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians narrowed by 14.7 percentage points (from 39.6 percentage points in 2008 to 24.9 percentage points in 2014-15).

6) There was a 70 per cent increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people enrolled in university over the last ten years (from 8,835 in 2004 to 15,043 in 2014).

Data on participation in higher education for Indigenous students is available from Department of Education and Training, Higher Education Statistics Student Data Collection (<https://www.education.gov.au/student-data>).

7) The IAS supports Community Led Grants, providing the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to devise strategies that will support their community. The new process will enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and service providers to work closely with their local PM&C Regional Network Office staff in the development of projects that deliver long-term and sustainable outcomes based on what a community needs. In many cases, regional offices will evaluate applications for local projects based on the needs of the community. Regional offices are encouraged to consult relevant community representatives, partner organisations and other key stakeholders.

PM&C regularly discusses Indigenous education policy with state and territory education authorities who develop and deliver programmes directly to schools and with our counterparts in the Department of Education and Training.