

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.1 – Funding for schools

DEST Question No. E832_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Tangara School for Girls, NSW

This school has an SES score of 116 – with the top score of around 130 in NSW.

It received a grant of \$150,000 in 2002 for “construction of general learning areas (classrooms?)...administration facilities...travel...road widening..landscaping”

How can this school satisfy ‘needs’ criteria? Does the BGA take into account the school’s resources?

Did it take into account the additional Commonwealth general recurrent funding of \$400,000 the school will receive in 2004 over its 2001 ERI allocation?

What are the school’s fees and other income from private sources? Include capital levies and private contribution to this project.

Did the school also receive a NSW interest subsidy? If so, was this taken into account?

If the Department does not know the answers to these questions, will it obtain advice from the BGA?

Answer:

Capital grants to non-government schools

In the case of Tangara School for Girls, the school was recommended for and received a grant of \$150,000 in the 2002 programme year for a project estimated to cost \$816,000. The school contributed the balance of the project cost. In making its recommendation, the Block Grant Authority (BGA) took into account the total resources available to the school, including the potential for it to obtain an interest subsidy from the NSW Government for which it has an application pending.

BGA Schedules of recommended projects for funding must comply with requirements listed in the *Commonwealth Programmes for Schools Quadrennial Administrative Guidelines 2001-2004* and the *Administrative Arrangements for Block Grant Authorities*. These include specific requirements that BGAs: ascertain whether there is a need for a project and what level of funding the school itself can provide; and then, within the total Australian Government funding available, prioritise projects on the basis of relative educational disadvantage of the students at the applicant schools.

In assessing projects for grants, BGAs take into account the total resources available to the school, such as fee income or potential borrowings, to determine whether the school can fund the project from its own resources. Projects are rejected if the BGA determines that the project could be funded by the school.

In each yearly funding round, BGAs rank eligible projects according to the relative educational disadvantage of the students at the school, and funds are allocated progressively from the most disadvantaged to the less disadvantaged until the BGA's allocation is exhausted.