

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. E854_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to DEST question E015_04

Question:

Can you confirm that The Southport School in Queensland will receive \$4.3 million in Commonwealth funding in 2004?

Please provide details of the types, and amounts, of Commonwealth schools funding going to this school in 2004.

Please provide details of the considerations that lead the Department to believe that this school is not essentially a for-profit concern. Please provide details about the company The Southport School Foundation Ltd and its activities, including its assets and capitalisation, and its financial relationship with the school itself.

Is the Department aware that the Foundation attached to this school holds monthly “Business Breakfasts” in the ballroom of the Marriott Resort, Surfers’ Paradise?

Is the Department aware that this event attracts substantial business sponsorship including a lucky draw for a \$5000 holiday, donated by various companies in the travel industry?

Is the Department aware that this school has commissioned a portrait of its retiring Principal, at a cost of \$14 000, and that it plans to fly the Principal to Melbourne on five occasions to sit for this portrait?

Can you outline the Government’s rationale for a funding system that provides this school with over \$4 million p.a. in direct Commonwealth subsidies?

Answer:

The Southport School

Based on its 2003 Census data, it is estimated that The Southport School will receive approximately \$3.5 million in Australian Government General Recurrent Grant funding for the 2004 programme year.

According to The Southport School website, The Southport School Foundation Ltd was formed in 1986 with the goal to provide leadership in the schools community affairs and to gather financial resources to assist the school with its development plans.

The Department does not have information relating to the Foundation’s assets, capitalisation or the amount of funding it has raised for the School. Under the SES funding arrangements, non-government schools are able to accept donations or gifts from private entities without having these having an adverse effect on the amount of funding it receives from the Australian Government.

The Department recognises the Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane as the Approved Authority of the school. This is a company under Letters Patent and a body corporate under *The Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act of 1861* in the state of Queensland. The Department accepts, under the provisions of this Act, that the school's Approved Authority has the power to run a school and that the school is not conducted for profit.

The Department is not aware of the details around the pending retirement of the Principal and therefore cannot comment on questions around a purported portrait.

It should also be noted that the Corporation of the Synod of the Diocese of Brisbane continues to meet all financial and accountability requirements as set out in the Agreement with the Commonwealth.