

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. E856_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to articles from Sunshine Coast Daily 3/12/03

Question:

Have you been informed by the Queensland Education Department of the outcome of its review of the status and registration of the Sunshine Coast Grammar School? What is that outcome?

Are you aware of media reports that this school is \$8 million in debt? Has this school approached the Department for emergency assistance? Has the school formally informed the Department of its financial situation?

Are you aware that the school is on the market? In this instance, and/or in such instances, what, to your knowledge is the entity that is to be sold?

Is it the not-for-profit entity that applies to the Commonwealth for funding? Please provide details of the entity.

In this case, what is the entity that is on the market? Have you held discussions or engaged in correspondence with representatives of the company behind this school, Sunshine Coast Grammar School Pty Ltd? Or with the school itself? What has been the nature of these discussions?

Are you convinced that this school is not operated for profit? Have you investigated its company status and structures? What is the result of these investigations?

Can you confirm that the school will receive almost \$4 million in Commonwealth recurrent grant for 2004, as reported?

What will it receive from the Commonwealth, in all funding categories, in 2004? What did it receive in 2003? Has this school received capital grants from the Commonwealth? Please provide details.

Answer:

Sunshine Coast Grammar School

The Queensland Non-State Schools Accreditation Board has notified the Department that from 23 January 2004, the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA) replaced Sunshine Coast Grammar School Ltd as the new governing body for Sunshine Coast Grammar School.

The Department has not received information relating to the financial status of the school before or after its sale to the PMSA. The school has not sought emergency assistance from the Department.

When a school changes its approved authority, to remain eligible for Australian Government recurrent funding, it is a requirement under the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000* that the new body provide evidence that it is incorporated, has the power to conduct a school and is not conducted for profit. The rules governing the incorporated body must also include provisions relating to it being wound up.

Before approval can be given for the new body to become the new approved authority of a school, it must provide a signed Deed of Novation. This requirement flows from provisions contained in the current Act whereby the incoming authority agrees to fulfil any obligations of the outgoing authority that have not been fulfilled, such as the acquittal of grants.

The PMSA is a body corporate under *The Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act of 1861*. Following an in-depth inspection of its constitution, it was accepted the PMSA has the power to run the School and is not conducted for profit.

Based on 2003 Census data, it is estimated that the school will receive \$3.55 million for the 2004 programme year. The school received \$3.33 million for the 2003 programme year.

The school was approved in 2000 for an Australian Government capital grant of \$117,500 to provide nine classrooms, two science laboratories and improved staff room and staff amenities. As the school will be continuing to operate as a school following its sale to the PMSA, arrangements are underway to transfer, to the new owners, responsibility for the Australian Government's recovery rights in relation to the capital grant.