

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2010-2011**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0860_11

Senator Mason asked on 24/02/2011, Hansard page 67.

Question

COMPLAINTS ABOUT LAPTOPS IN SCHOOLS

Senator MASON—I have received some information from constituents, and in one case through an MP. Again, if you are aware of this, let me know, but I suspect you are not. But let me canvass the issue. In the Redlands—which is east of Brisbane, towards the bay—according to a constituent, Cleveland State High School says that only year 11 and 12 students were given laptops, and that may be because of the rollout process; it may well be. But they had to pay \$240 a year for them. This is what is being claimed. I am just saying this is being claimed. I do not know about the veracity of this. Ms Paul—Sure. Senator MASON—If the department could check and find out what is going on, I would be very happy. Ms Paul—Was that a media report as well? Senator MASON—No. Ms Paul—This has come as a report to you, okay. Senator MASON—This has come from a constituent— Ms Paul—We will check it out. Senator MASON—and through an MP in this case, Mr Chairman. Ms Paul—We will check it out for you. Senator MASON—Similarly, at Alexandra Hills State High School, again, only years 11 and 12 were given laptops and they had to pay \$300 a year. This is what is being put. Again, I am not saying any more than that. Ms Paul—Yes. Senator MASON—And at Capalaba State High School, I was told that only the teachers were given laptops. If that could be checked, I would be very happy. And also, at Proserpine State High School, sort of in the central north of Queensland—I have actually got a copy of an email, and I can certainly give a copy of this to you, Ms Paul, and a copy to the chair, if that— Ms Paul—It would be helpful. As we have said before, the policy on this is clear and there have been instances that we have had to intervene on. Dr Arthur—As has been indicated, we will take it on notice. There is also a regular flow of correspondence to the minister's office and the department on this sort of issue, and we are quite accustomed to following this up and ensuring that our guidelines are being properly implemented as part of our normal implementation of the program. Senator MASON—Ms Paul, if it is true it is contrary, I think, to government policy. Ms Paul—It may be true. As Dr Arthur has just said, that is exactly why we follow every one of these up. Senator MASON—Could you take that on notice and come back? Ms Paul—Yes.

Answer

The Department continues to liaise with the Queensland Department of Education and Training (QLDDET) regarding the charging of fees to parents for computers and other information and communication technology (ICT) equipment in Queensland Government schools, including Cleveland District State High School, Alexandra Hills State High School, Proserpine State High School and Capalaba State High School.

The Department is advised by QLDDET that it is moving to a centralised management of the National Secondary School Computer Fund (the Fund) implementation. This includes the centralised acquisition and distribution of computers. All schools participating in the Fund, will be required to register their school level computing technology program with QLD DET.

Regarding the specific queries raised by Senator Mason about Cleveland State High School, Alexandra Hills State High School, Capalaba State High School and Proserpine State High School, the Department can advise as follows:

Cleveland State High School

The Department is advised by QLDDET that currently, students in Years 9 to 12 at the school can access computers inside computer laboratories or in laptop pods. Additionally, the school is in the process of planning for a 1:1 laptop program for students in Years 11 and 12 that will allow students to take the devices home. QLDDET has advised that no fee is being charged by Cleveland State High School.

Alexandra Hills State High School

The Department is advised by the QLDDET that Alexandra Hills State High School is facilitating a 1:1 laptop program for Year 11 students at the school which will allow students to take the devices home. The school has averaged the take home costs over a four year period. Year 11 students are currently being charged \$250 in the first year and will be charged \$156 when entering Year 12. Alexandra Hills State High School computer technology program will be processed through the QLDDET registration process as a matter of priority to ensure that the fee aligns with the Fund's guidelines.

Students in Years 9 and 10 at the school have access to school-based computers provided under the Fund.

Capalaba State High School

As at 31 March 2011, Capalaba State High School had installed 153 computers under the Fund. The school will continue to benefit from the Fund to achieve a computer to student ratio of 1:1 by 31 December 2011.

The Department is advised by the QLDDET that teachers in all QLD schools, including Capalaba State High School, have been provided with a laptop through the QLD Government funded "Computers for Teachers" program. This is a QLD Government initiative and is not associated with the Fund.

The Department is further advised by QLDDET that planning is underway to implement a 1:1 laptop program for senior students at Capalaba State High School. Details of the program are being developed in consultation with QLDDET and the school community to ensure that the program is compliant with the Fund.

Proserpine State High School

The Department is advised by QLDDDET that Proserpine State High School is implementing a 1:1 laptop program for students in Years 9 and 10 that allows students to take the devices home. The school has elected to purchase high-end computing devices, or, devices that cost in excess of the \$1,000 provided by the Australian Government under the Fund.

The Department is further advised by QLDDDET that the Principal at Proserpine State High School has communicated extensively with the school's parent body and has made himself available for a meeting and a tour of the school with any parent who has concerns or seeks more information about the 1:1 laptop program.

The charging of fees for high end devices is permitted within the parameters outlined by the Department. QLDDDET continues to work with the school to ensure that the school's 1:1 laptop program is wholly compliant with the Fund.