

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2012-2013

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0988_13

Senator Nash asked on 14 February 2013 , Hansard page 55

Question

Questions submitted to public and professional school forums

Ms Paul: Except for what you would not see such as the professional forums that Mr Cook just referred to. He has spoken at principals' forums and so on. Most of the others are public, but some of those forums are professional forums. ... Senator NASH: That has to be a good thing. As I was saying earlier, obviously all of the questions that are submitted cannot be dealt with at the forum, so what is the process for selecting which ones are? Mr Cook: I think that would actually be through the communications area rather than my area. They would manage those forums. I would have to take that on notice. Senator NASH: Can you take a couple of things on notice for me. Obviously out of the great plethora that you get you have to figure out which ones are appropriate. If you could perhaps take on notice for us how the questions to be answered at the forums are selected and who determines which questions are appropriate? Ms Paul: Perhaps I can help there, having MCed some of them. In terms of questions coming from the audience, that is a free-for-all. That is open. Senator NASH: I am specifically talking about the ones that have been submitted online. Ms Paul: As Mr Cook took on notice, we can take that on notice. Obviously were they discourteous or inappropriate they would not be put up.

Answer

Questions were selected for answering based on a number of considerations, including whether they were submitted by a peak body that was representative of a large subset of stakeholders, if they would answer issues that had been the topic of discussion in the public domain and/or would contribute to the knowledge of the wider audience, and if they were questions that had been asked by a large number of people.

However, due to the high volumes of questions asked, not all questions meeting these criteria were answered.

The Terms and Conditions of the online forums make it quite clear to people when they register to participate that not every question will be answered.