

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1

**Output Group:** 1.2 – Assistance for individuals including those with special needs

#### DEST Question No. E305\_05

Senator Nettle provided in writing.

#### Question:

Literacy Vouchers

1. How much will the administration/brokers fees cost? Is this included in or additional to the \$700?
2. Will all persons be subject to police checks?
3. What quality control mechanisms will be in place (e.g. qualifications etc.)
4. Will the teacher teaching that child be able to get the voucher to give additional help?
5. Is there not an incentive for schools to encourage failure to pick up extra money?
6. Can the money go to the school? (School as broker, school as tutors)
7. What will happen in remote/one teacher school places etc.
8. Given that Education and training Minister Dr Nelson describes it as a “pilot scheme”:
  - a) What are the target outcomes for each individual?
  - b) How will these be assessed (or benchmarked?)
  - c) Will parents get an objective report of the progress made as a result of the voucher?
  - d) How will the proportions who reach the target be reported?
  - e) Will the success rates of various brokers and tutors be monitored and publicly reported?
  - f) What steps will be put in place to monitor and report the outcomes of the pilot?

#### Answer:

##### *Tutorial Credit Initiative*

1. The Brokers will be provided with administration payments separately, and in addition to the \$700 Tutorial Credit. These payments will be calculated on a per eligible student basis, with different rates for students in metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions. A proportion of the administration payment will be based on the actual number of students commencing and completing tuition under the Tutorial Credit.

The rates are as follows:

Brokers will be paid an Establishment payment on signing of the contract to cover initial administrative costs such as preliminary briefing sessions for parents, the promotion of the Pilot and costs associated with contracting tutors. The Establishment payment will be \$26.40 (inc GST) per estimated number of metropolitan students and \$33.00 (inc GST) per estimated number of non-metropolitan students in the State or Territory being serviced.

Two performance-based payments will be made on receipt of satisfactory Progress Reports, and the amount of the payment will be based upon the number of student commencements and completions at the time of the Report.

The performance-based payments will be calculated at a rate of:

- \$59.40 (inc GST) per metropolitan student commencing tutorial assistance during the invoice period
- \$74.25 (inc GST) per non-metropolitan student commencing tutorial assistance during the invoice period
- \$33.00 (inc GST) per metropolitan student completing tutorial assistance during the invoice period.
- \$41.25 (inc GST) per non-metropolitan student completing tutorial assistance during the invoice period.

A final payment will be calculated on the basis of \$13.20 (GST inclusive) per estimated number of metropolitan students and \$16.50 (GST inclusive) per estimated number of non-metropolitan students in the State or Territory being serviced, on satisfactory provision of the Final Report.

2. All persons providing tuition to students under the Tutorial Credit Initiative will be required to have undergone an Australian Federal Police criminal police record check with no offences having been recorded, and meet any applicable State and Territory Working with Children requirements.

3. Prospective Tutors must demonstrate relevant formal academic tertiary qualifications in education, such as a Diploma or Bachelor of Education, or partial completion of teaching qualifications that are recognised in Australia. (In these instances Tutors, at a minimum, must currently be enrolled in a teacher training course and successfully completed at least half of the course including successfully completing all scheduled practicums thus far associated with the course).

In some circumstances, such as in remote areas, teachers' aides or unqualified persons with extensive teaching experience may be acceptable. In these cases a letter of recommendation from their current, or if currently unemployed their most recent, employer is required.

In the case of current teacher education students – a letter of recommendation from the relevant Higher Education Institution is required.

4. Tutors should not be the student's regular class teacher except in remote or isolated areas where there is no suitable alternative. In such cases, reasons why other tutors are not available must be documented on the Broker's file for the Tutor.

5. No. All education authorities have committed to achieving performance targets as specified in the regulations to the States Grants Act 2000. In the case of literacy all students in Year 3 will achieve the national benchmarks for reading, writing and spelling for Year 3. It is recognised that the performance targets may not be met in respect of the very small percentage of students who have severe educational disabilities.

6. Yes. A school is eligible to tender as a broker or to be contracted by a broker to provide tuition.

7. It is intended that tutorial assistance be provided to eligible students in all areas, including remote and rural areas. The Request for Tender requires tenderers to describe their strategies to service these students. The draft Tutorial Credit Initiative Guidelines allow that, where no suitably qualified tutor is available, teachers' aides or unqualified persons with extensive teaching experience may be acceptable.

In addition, the draft Tutorial Credit Initiative Guidelines allow for a travel allowance to be paid where Tutors, in remote areas, must stay away from home overnight in order to attend a Tutorial session or sessions. Payments of travel costs will not be deducted from the value of the Tutorial Credit.

8 (a) The outcome sought from the Tutorial Credit Initiative Pilot is a verifiable, improvement in student's reading skills.

8 (b) The outcomes will be measured by, but not limited to:

- the post tuition assessment; and
- other evidence such as parent's/caregiver's and teacher's comments and judgements.

8 (c) Yes. Parents will be provided with an assessment of their child's performance against the work programme established by the tutor.

8 (d) (e) and (f) Progress in implementing the Tutorial Credit Initiative will be monitored through the requirement that Brokers submit two progress reports and a final report providing detailed information to DEST regarding the administration, uptake and progress of the Pilot. Brokers will also be required to provide information for use in the evaluation of the Initiative.

The outcomes of the Initiative will be assessed in an independent evaluation, the report of which will be publicly available. The specific terms of reference for the evaluation are yet to be considered by the Minister.