

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 1  
**Output Group:** 1.1 – Funding for schools

#### DEST Question No. E101\_06

Senator Allison provided in writing.

#### Question:

In response to QON No.47 last year, Senator Vanstone stated that a "decision in regards to ongoing funding for anti-bullying initiatives beyond 2005 has yet to be made".

- a. What was the decision in regard to this? Does this mean there will be no grants made to schools beyond 2005 to specifically assist them in implementation of the NSSF?
- b. Do you have any idea of the number of teachers that have been reached by this programme? Has the effectiveness of this \$4.5 million program been examined by DEST? If yes, what was found and was it publicly reported? If not, why not?
- c. What plans are there for the NSSF after 2005? Will the Bullying.No Way! Website be continued beyond 2005? Will there be any further materials or support guides produced by the Government to aid the implementation of the NSSF?
- d. How are schools expected to implement the NSSF without Government assistance and without taking money away from teaching and capital expenditures? \$3 million was provided for teacher professional learning to support the implementation, does this now just stop?

#### Answer:

##### *National Safe Schools Framework*

- a. Consideration is still being given to how best to progress the safe schools agenda beyond 2005.
- b. The Australian Government has provided \$4.5 million to support the implementation of the *National Safe Schools Framework* (NSSF). This is made up of the following components:
  - \$3 million to assist teacher professional learning and development in relation to the NSSF, under the *Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme* (AGQTP).
  - \$1 million for a Best Practice Grants Programme to support and showcase innovative and effective approaches to ensuring safe school environments.
  - \$300,000 for resources to assist implementation
  - \$200,000 to support the *Bullying. No Way!* website

Due to the diversity of these components, and the fact that implementation activities are still currently underway, it is not possible to make summative judgements on the effectiveness of the package as a whole. There is, however, data available on the numbers of teachers who have so far been reached under different components:

- Under the AGQTP, during 2004-05 more than 14,000 teachers participated in professional learning related to the implementation of the NSSF.
  - Schools with limited systemic support have received extra assistance through a programme of strategic professional assistance from the Australian Principals Association's Professional Development Council (APAPDC). During 2004 a total of 31 strategic seminars were held in locations around Australia, with over 850 school teacher participants representing a range of Catholic and independent schools.
- c. Consideration is still being given to how best to progress the safe schools agenda beyond 2005. The Australian Government's funding to support the *Bullying. No Way!* website currently extends to 2008.
- d. The NSSF reaffirms principles and practices which schools already implement as a matter of course in their fundamental mission to provide supportive and effective learning environments for all students. As such, teacher professional learning in relation to the principles of the NSSF will be supported by ongoing professional development programmes operating in each education authority jurisdiction. Australian Government support will also continue to be available through extended funding for the AGQTP of \$139 million, which was announced in the 2005-06 Budget. Under this programme, the NSSF will continue to be a priority area through to 2009. Further, support will be available through complementary initiatives concerning values education and drug education. In particular:
- \$14.9 million is available to support the National School Drug Education Strategy over the next four years. The primary objective of the Strategy is to build resilience in young people. It is now well accepted that resilience is a key protective factor, not only against drug use, but also against bullying and other damaging behaviours.
  - \$29.7 million is available to support values education in schools over the next four years. This focuses on developing values central to safe schools, such as respect, care and compassion, and tolerance.