

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011–2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools

DEEWR Question No.EW0203_12

Senator Nash provided in writing.

Question

Indigenous Supplementary Assistance (ISA)

In its budget submission, the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) raises concerns about indiscriminate funding for schools under the Indigenous Supplementary Assistance. It says a large number of schools have had funding reduced despite the Indigenous Funding Guarantee that was put in place to maintain their funding until funding under the new arrangements surpass their initial funding levels. ISCA also states the premise of the Indigenous Funding Guarantee is flawed, resulting in real term reductions in specific indigenous support funding.

- Is the government/department aware of these concerns?
- Has there been discussions with ISCA about these concerns?
- How many schools have been affected?
- What is being done to address this anomaly?
- Is it being investigated?

Answer

The Indigenous Funding Guarantee was introduced as a transition mechanism to help non-government schools adjust to the introduction of Indigenous Supplementary Assistance, which has been available since 2009 to all non-government schools with Indigenous students. The purpose of the Indigenous Funding Guarantee was to cover the gap in funding for schools where the combined recurrent and Indigenous Supplementary Assistance funding in a program year is less than 2008 levels. The Indigenous Funding Guarantee was not intended to maintain school funding at 2008 levels with indexation or to insulate schools from funding impacts associated with enrolment changes.

The Department is aware of concerns raised by the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA). Senior departmental officers have discussed these concerns with ISCA.

The Department was made aware that some non-government, non-systemic schools that received the Indigenous Funding Guarantee may have been disadvantaged in per capita terms in the move to this new arrangement. The Department reviewed the application of the Guarantee and schools that would potentially benefit under a per capita arrangement have had their entitlements calculated accordingly. Twenty non-systemic schools benefited under the per capita arrangement.

An extensive review of the Indigenous Funding Guarantee was also undertaken by

the Department in 2010 in response to concerns raised by ISCA. The review was independently verified by Apis Group Pty Ltd. The review found that the current model provides the greatest overall funding benefit to independent schools in receipt of the Indigenous Funding Guarantee.

In accordance with the policy intent of the Indigenous Funding Guarantee, no non-government school has experienced a reduction in per capita funding since the introduction of the new Indigenous funding arrangements.