

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome 2
DEEWR Question No. EW547_10

Senator Siewert provided in writing.

Question

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Funding

What measures are in place to ensure that the states and territories use the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Funding for Indigenous literacy and numeracy, given that the federal government's priority is education, as part of the 'education revolution'?

Answer

From 1 January 2009, funding previously provided under Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme to state and territory government authorities has been rolled into allocations provided through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (in support of the National Education Agreement). Similarly, funding previously provided under ITAS for non-government authorities has been consolidated with five other Indigenous programs to form Indigenous Supplementary Assistance which is provided for under the Schools Assistance Act 2008. Commonwealth funds are to be used to achieve the targets and outcomes contained in agreements with the Commonwealth, including closing the gaps in literacy and numeracy outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

Through the new intergovernmental arrangements which came into effect from 1 January 2009, governments have agreed to halve the gap between the reading, writing and numeracy outcomes of Indigenous Australians and other Australians by 2018. These commitments form part of the National Education Agreement and the National Indigenous Reform Agreement signed between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

Australia's Education Ministers, Premiers, Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister have also agreed to prioritise literacy and numeracy strategies for Indigenous Australians as part of the Indigenous Education Action Plan currently under development by the Ministerial Council on Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs. The Indigenous Education Action Plan is to be provided to the Council of Australian Governments early in 2010.

The Australian Government has established the following measures to support the educational needs of students, including Indigenous students:

- **National Education Agreement:** to assist students to acquire the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in society and employment in a globalised economy.
- **National Partnership for Literacy and Numeracy:** to enable states and territories to implement initiatives which demonstrate evidence for accelerating improvement in student performance in literacy and numeracy. This effort will focus on schools whose

students are most in need of support. Targets will be set for literacy and numeracy improvements for Indigenous students.

- **National Partnership for Low SES Communities:** to fund a range of within school and broader reforms aimed at addressing the complex and interconnected challenges facing students in disadvantaged communities, including Indigenous students.
- **National Partnership for Improving Teacher Quality:** to improve teacher and school leader quality to sustain a quality teaching workforce. A highly skilled workforce is essential to the improvement of literacy and numeracy outcomes.
- **Literacy and Numeracy Pilots in Low SES communities:** These pilots have a significant focus on support for Indigenous students and increasing community engagement to assist with early interventions for students, so that they are well prepared for school and can fully participate in literacy and numeracy programs.
- **Closing the Gap: Expansion of Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Programs for Underachieving Indigenous Students:** for the expansion of intensive literacy and numeracy programs for underachieving Indigenous students and the development of personal learning plans.

The Australian Government is also managing the development of an evidence base of effective practice in literacy and numeracy, which will assist states and territories to make better informed decisions in supporting students' literacy and numeracy development, particularly for those falling behind.