

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

**Outcome 2 - Schools**

**DEEWR Question No.EW0645\_11**

**Senator Siewert asked on 21/10/2010, Hansard page 41.**

**Question**

**IMPORTANCE OF HEARING PROGRAMS**

Dr Bruniges—There is the Stronger Smarter Learning Communities project. There is the Dare to Lead program in terms of principal leadership. But when you get down to the thing you say about the classroom and the learning and the importance of hearing, I think that can act as a significant barrier, there is no doubt, to someone's engagement with learning and hence their attendance. But I would have to go away and look at in each one of these programs. Maybe we could pick out for you some of those programs that do look at strategies underneath to deal with hearing and share with you as well on that. Senator SIEWERT—That would be appreciated. Thank you.

**Answer**

The primary responsibility for supplying and maintaining sound field amplification systems in schools is the responsibility of the states and territories and the relevant education providers.

There are a range of strategies being implemented in schools depending on local needs and conditions. Some examples of these are:

Kimberley Sound Amplification Project

Acknowledging the links between hearing and early literacy acquisition, in 2009 the Australian Government provided funding of \$1.3 million to support the Kimberley Sound Amplification Project. The cross sectoral pilot project has provided sound amplification equipment for all classrooms in Kimberley schools in the Government, Catholic and independent sectors. The project is in response to the evidence that on any one day in a Kimberley classroom, up to 65% of Aboriginal students can experience intermittent hearing loss.

Sound amplification systems in targeted Northern Territory remote schools.

Under the Smarter Schools and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnerships, funding provided has supported the Northern Territory Department of Education to install Sound Field Systems in targeted remote schools.

Northern Territory National Partnership – conductive hearing loss coordination.

In addition, with funding provided under the Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnership, the Northern Territory Department of Education is establishing Territory-wide conductive hearing coordination to ensure schools have access to appropriate levels of professional development to support students. This initiative

has enhanced services provided to support students with conductive hearing loss. 37 Closing the Gap schools have accessed services, such as professional learning programs for classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistant teachers that focus on the provision of advice about improving classroom acoustics, and the provision of support in the development of action plans for individual and groups of students who are diagnosed with Otitis Media (middle ear disease) and Conductive Hearing Loss.