

Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

DEEWR Question No. EW0813_12

Senator Siewert asked on 20 October 2011, Hansard page 38

Question

Focus schools - completed program

Senator SIEWERT: Can you tell me how many of the focus schools have completed their school and community partnership action plans? Mr Goodwin: Not at this stage but I can certainly take that on notice for you.

Answer

Action 19 of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan* states that "Focus schools will commence negotiating a formal school-community partnership agreement between the school, families and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in 2011 that sets out the respective responsibilities of each party and the ways in which they will work together to create a culture of high expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and support improvements in their engagement, wellbeing and educational outcomes".

The Department requested information from all education providers with focus schools to address this question. As a result of this request, information was provided on 601 of the 891 focus schools. Of those that responded, it was reported that 196 focus schools had a completed school-community partnership agreement in place. A further 166 focus schools had commenced negotiation of their agreement and 239 had not commenced. No information was provided on 290 focus schools at the time of completing this response. An overview of all responses by state is provided below.

| | ACT | NSW | NT | Qld | SA | Tas | Vic | WA | Total |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Completed | 9 | 1 | 11 | 118 | 18 | 2 | 0 | 37 | 196 |
| Commenced | 0 | 4 | 49 | 0 | 6 | 43 | 0 | 64 | 166 |
| Not commenced | 23 | 1 | 3 | 109 | 68 | 27 | 0 | 8 | 239 |
| No information provided | 0 | 87 | 0 | 63 | 5 | 3 | 131 | 1* | 290 |
| Total Focus Schools | 32 | 93 | 63 | 290 | 97 | 75 | 131 | 110 | 891 |

*school closed

In the responses received, a number of education providers requested that the Committee be made aware that the development of school/community partnerships is often complex, and appropriate time should be given for schools to 'work carefully and thoughtfully' with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities to 'ensure participatory development of enduring school-community partnerships'.

The New South Wales Government response noted that progress of school-community partnerships in focus schools will be reported 'in the 2011 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan Annual Report, as per reporting arrangements agreed through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Working Group'. It is anticipated that this report will be available in December 2012.