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Mr J Carter
Secretary
Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business
and Education Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Bill 2000

The Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia represents some 120 schools located in metropolitan Perth and rural and remote Western Australia. Of its 120 members, 22 are classified as rural and 9 are classified as remote. Twelve of the rural and remote schools are Aboriginal Independent Community Schools and there are two Aboriginal Independent Community Schools in metropolitan Perth.

AISWA supports the introduction of the SES method of funding non-government schools for its transparency, simplicity and because schools serving communities with similar SES levels are funded at the same level. The arguments developed by NCISA in its submission are fully supported by AISWA and for this reason are not repeated in this submission.

AISWA wishes to make three key points that are relevant in the context of its member schools.

- *Impact on Rural and Remote Schools.* While the introduction of the SES alone cannot redress the additional costs associated with the delivery of education in these areas, it does ensure a realistic measure of the socio economic community that schools in rural and remote areas serve. In this way, it provides a degree of differential funding. SES scores for census districts in rural and remote areas are significantly lower than those for metropolitan Perth. The ERI was totally incapable of measuring the additional needs of rural and remote schools which were a result of their location.

- *Indigenous Students.* The funding of indigenous students at 70% of the AGSRC is welcomed by the Association, however, it should be noted that eight of these schools in Western Australia are the sole provider of education within the community they serve. Were these schools not in existence, the State Education Department would be responsible for the provision of education at 100% of the State AGSRC. It is essential, therefore, that the Commonwealth continue to support students attending Aboriginal Independent Community Schools at the maximum possible level in order to provide equitable treatment to all indigenous students.
- *Targeted Programmes.* The size of WA leads to both relative and real isolation for schools in respect of the ability to access professional support to meet the National Goals of Schooling. The funding available through the Commonwealth Targeted Programmes assists schools to address the key initiatives of the Commonwealth Government. In Western Australia, targeted programme funding is maximised through its allocation to the three sectors which provides economies of scale while acknowledging the differing requirements of schools in the three sectors.. This ensures that regional professional development, run on either a sectoral or cross-sectoral basis, reaches the maximum number of schools without undue expenditure on administration. AISWA strongly supports the continuing distribution of targeted funds through a single authority for the non-government sector in Western Australia.

In summary, AISWA supports the introduction of the SES methodology as the basis for funding non-government schools and looks forward to participating in ongoing consultation with DETYA in respect to the new arrangements for the Targeted Programmes.

Thank you for giving AISWA the opportunity to make a submission to this inquiry.

Yours sincerely

(Mrs) Audrey Jackson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2 August 2000