

**ABORIGINAL STUDENT LIAISON OFFICERS**

On 17 November 2003, Ms Cusack placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 1:** Ms Cusack asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training—

- (1) How many of the 12 Aboriginal student liaison officers are allocated to primary schools versus secondary schools? (Hansard p1)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) Aboriginal student liaison officers are allocated to districts on the basis of Aboriginal student enrolments. They are not allocated to primary or secondary schools.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
**Deputy Premier**  
**Minister for Education and Training**  
**Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**

**NUMBER OF TEACHERS IN RURAL NSW**

On 17 November 2003, Ms Rhiannon placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION. 2:**

Ms Rhiannon asked Ms McClelland,  
Director-General, Department of Education  
and Training —

- (1) Could you provide figures to the Committee on the current number of teachers in rural New South Wales, particularly western NSW, and the projected supply required in future years, so as to allow the committee to have a baseline for comparison? (Hansard p9)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) In February 2003 there were 24 009 full-time equivalent school teachers in rural New South Wales including 3 036 full-time equivalent school teachers in western New South Wales.

The projected supply required to fill vacancies due to separation of school teachers or to meet new policy initiatives in rural New South Wales for the years 2004 to 2006, is 1 248, 1 507, and 1 663 full-time equivalent respectively.

Separations include retirements, resignations, medical retirements, death and terminations.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
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**STUDENT TESTING PROGRAMS IN NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

On 17 November 2003, Reverend Nile placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 3:** Reverend Nile asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training —

- (1) What is the cost of providing the years 3 and 5 basic skills test, the year 6 computer skills test, the year 7 English language assessment and the Secondary Numeracy Assessment Program (SNAP)? (Hansard p11).
- (2) Will there be any consideration of a special refund to cover the costs of these tests for non-government schools so they are not disadvantaged? (Hansard p11)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) The costs associated with the relevant testing programs for each student in non-government schools, are:
  - Basic Skills Test (BST) for Years 3 and 5 - \$16.00
  - Primary Writing Assessment (PWA) for Years 3 and 5 - \$21.50
  - Computer Skills Assessment for Year 6 (CSA6) - \$26.00
  - English Language and Literacy Assessment (ELLA) for Years 7 and 8 - \$26.50
  - Secondary Numeracy Assessment (SNAP) for Years 7 and 8 - \$26.50

Revenues are received by the NSW Department of Education and Training (DET) from the non-government sector for each non-government student participating in the abovementioned tests. The cost per student to the non-government sector is based on costs incurred by the Department in developing, trialling, implementing, marking, analysing and reporting on the various testing programs. High quality and valued support materials are also provided to participating schools as part of these costs.

- (2) The Per Capita Grants funding regimen for non-government schools includes an element of funding to cover the costs of the Department's testing programs.

Statewide testing programs are a DET initiative for government schools, their students and their parents. Non-government schools are invited to participate in the various statewide testing programs, on a cost recovery basis to the Department.

Any decision therefore, to participate in these tests and agree to meet the cost recovery charges set by the Department, is made by the non-government sector.

Accordingly, there is no consideration being given by the Department, to any change to current policy on cost recovery charges for testing programs.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
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**Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) APPLICATIONS**

On 17 November 2003, Ms Cusack placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 4:** Ms Cusack asked Mr Bendall, Manager, FOI and Privacy, Department of Education and Training-

- (1) Can you please provide to the Committee the document from the Premier's Department which requests Ministers to report to the Premier's Department on FOI applications received ? (Hansard p 17-18).

**ANSWER:**

- (1) Attached is a copy of the letter received by me from the NSW Premier's Department, advising of reporting requirements in relation to Freedom of Information matters within my portfolios.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
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**CLOSURE OF REDFERN PUBLIC SCHOOL**

On 17 November 2003, Reverend Nile placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 5:** Reverend Nile asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training-

- (1) Has Redfern public school closed or is it still functioning? Is there a transition period? (Hansard page 23)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) Redfern Public School closed at the end of 2002.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
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**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

On 17 November 2003, Reverend Nile placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 6:** Reverend Nile asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training-

- (1) Do you have any process whereby you assess the efficiency of the special religious education program? How does the department assess whether it is working satisfactorily? Should action be taken to improve it? (Hansard p23-24)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) Special Religious Education in schools is conducted by authorised representatives of approved religious persuasions. The persuasions are responsible for the content of the lessons taught by the teachers they authorise. Whilst the Department of Education and Training exercises a duty of care for students in all school activities, the teaching and efficiency of Special Religious Education is a matter for approved providers.

The Department of Education and Training monitors the implementation of the policy on Special Religious Education through the Director-General's Consultative Committee on Special Religious Education. The Committee consists of representatives from the major Christian churches through the Inter-church Commission on Religious Education in Schools, the Jewish Board of Education, the Islamic Council of NSW, the NSW Teachers' Federation, the Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations of NSW, the Primary Principals' Association and the Secondary Principals' Council. This Committee provides advice to the Director-General on Special Religious Education policy and its implementation.

Andrew Refshauge MP  
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**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

On 17 November 2003, Ms Rhiannon placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 7:** Ms Rhiannon asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training -

- (1) In regard to Public-Private Partnerships, who conducts the assessment at the end of the last three years of the contract, how detailed is the assessment and what form does it take? What safeguards are in place if something happens (eg the property becomes run down) after money has been exchanged? (Hansard p24)
- (2) In regard to PPPs, what financial penalties are specified in the contract for failure to provide and perform the services required? (Hansard p25)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) In March 2001, the NSW Government endorsed a proposal to assess the feasibility of applying a Public Private Partnerships (PPP) approach, to supply and manage the operations of nine NSW Government school facilities in new urban release areas.

Senior officers of the Department of Education and Training and NSW Treasury formed a project team to assess the proposal. The project was renamed the New Schools – Privately Financed Project (PFP).

The new schools PFP contract period commenced on 7 March 2003 and will end on 31 December 2032. In the final three years of the contract, a comprehensive facilities review undertaken by independent assessors will be conducted to establish whether the schools' facilities meet the standards specified in the contract. Major life-cycle items such as roofs will need to have a usable life which exceeds the contract period by six years. This will guard against the potential for the contractor to 'run down' the condition of the facilities.

If the facilities do not meet the specified standards, funds will be deducted from the contractor's monthly payments until the available funds equal the estimated cost for remedial work. If at the end of the contract period remedial work remains, the funds will be used to rectify any shortfall in facility standards.



- (2) In relation to financial penalties, the contract contains an extensive regime predicated on the performance standard of the services required, the achievement of specified help desk service response times by the contractor, and the necessity to have the school's facilities available to the school at all times.

Any failure by the contractor to meet these requirements will result in financial penalties. The penalties will escalate rapidly for any continued failure in performance, response or availability.

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**EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS OF STAFF AT THE LEARNING MATERIALS  
PRODUCTION CENTRE**

On 17 November 2003, Ms Rhiannon placed the following question on the General Purpose Standing Committee No 1 Question and Answer Paper.

**QUESTION 8:** Ms Rhiannon asked Ms McClelland, Director-General, Department of Education and Training -

- (1) Will the Department honour the employment contracts of staff at the Learning Materials Production Centre who are due to finish at the end of 2004 and 2005? (Hansard p33)

**ANSWER:**

- (1) The Learning Materials Production Centre does not currently employ staff on fixed term contracts.

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**Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**