

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Guyula to the Minister for Education:

Hilton Hayes Consultancy

Please advise of the details of the Education contract awarded to Hilton Hayes Consultancy:

1. What are the terms and objectives of this project?
2. How do they plan to gather data?
3. What communities in my electorate will they visit?
4. Who will be consulted on the ground? Will interpreters be used?
5. Will Yolngu community members be employed as part of the project?
6. How will the information be used by the Department of Education?
7. Will there be a public report and when will it made available?

RESPONSE:

1. The consultant, Mr Hylton Hayes, has advised that he is unable to continue with the contract to complete this project due to unforeseen private family matters.

The project had been commissioned by the joint school attendance taskforce* to study recent declines in enrolment and attendance in the Arnhem region and was to include analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data across 15 Arnhem schools (12 government and 3 non-government).

The objectives of this project were to:

- identify any trends and patterns in the Arnhem schools' enrolment and attendance data
- gain community insight behind the recent declines in Arnhem schools
- provide recommendations to the taskforce to respond to the issues identified as driving the recent declines.

A copy of the intended Terms of Reference for the project is attached (Attachment A).

Due to this project being unable to be progressed as had been intended, the taskforce has been undertaking other work to achieve some of the same objectives.

This has included the establishment of a stakeholder network focused on school engagement to:

- review system-level and school-level enrolment and attendance data and identify trends
- provide community insight behind the recent declines in Arnhem schools
- collectively problem-solve new approaches to school engagement (to be undertaken in five week sprints)
- review the impact of school-level actions to improve attendance.

Participants at these forums include community members, school leaders (government and non-government) and representatives from the department, the Commonwealth Government and the Catholic Education Office.

The department is also currently developing a new terms of reference for the project and a revised scope of requirements will be prepared to reflect current needs and matters outstanding. This will include analysis of the Galiwinku and Maningrida school and community contexts as two deeper case studies. It is anticipated that this project will be a Tier 2 procurement process and normal procurement action will subsequently be undertaken.

**The joint taskforce is a Northern Territory Government and Commonwealth Government senior officials group which works to identify partnering opportunities to address attendance issues in the Northern Territory through collaborative effort. The group monitors Northern Territory enrolment and attendance data to identify trends of potential concern to enable timely and effective responses.*

2. The scope of the new works is being finalized but it is likely that data analysis will be primarily conducted utilising existing datasets held by the department pertaining to enrolment and attendance, including:
 - Enrolment numbers
 - Attendance rates
 - Reasons for non-attendance
 - Student mobility
 - Retention rates.
3. The scope of requirements for the revised project is being finalised but will focus on Galiwinku and Maningrida.

No communities in the Nhulunbuy electorate were visited by the Hylton Hayes Consultancy. The sites in scope for this project had been:

- Alyangula
- Alyarmandumanja Umbakumba
- Angurugu

- Banyala Garrangali
- Gapuwiyak
- Maningrida
- Milingimbi
- Milyakburra
- Nhulunbuy
- Numbulwar
- Ramingining
- Galiwinku
- Warruwi
- Yirrkala.

The communities now participating in the stakeholder group through the taskforce are as follows:

- Alyarmandumanja Umbakumba
- Angurugu
- Banyala Garrangali
- Gapuwiyak
- Maningrida
- Milingimbi
- Milyakburra
- Galiwinku
- Wadeye.

N.B. The stakeholder group targeted schools with an average attendance levels of less than 50%.

4. For the stakeholder group work, the community members and school leaders participating in the forums are responsible for community engagement. It is considered that through this model of engagement that interpreters are not required.
5. Through the stakeholder group work, no additional staff members have been employed by the department. Participant community members, some of whom are Yolngu people, are committed to leading change in their communities on a voluntary basis. It should be noted that part of the work of the forums is to review whether schools are maximizing resourcing. Ideas generated through the stakeholder group may impact employment at the school level.
6. The joint taskforce will utilise findings from the school engagement forums and the new project to identify any trends and appropriate responses required at a system level, including areas for inter-government collaboration, to respond to recent declines.
7. The scope of requirements for the revised project is currently being finalised.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ASSESSMENT OF THE ARNHEM REGION for the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Department of Education is observing a continual decline in student enrolment and attendance within the Arnhem Region. In 2018, student numbers for the region decreased in thirteen Arnhem schools, and only saw an increase in three Arnhem schools.

The department is aware of significant regional issues that the region is facing, including the Rio Tinto closing of the alumina refinery operation which is having an impact on student enrolment numbers, particularly within Nhulunbuy.

The department is seeking an independent assessment of the current apprehensions, issues and trends that are impacting children and families attending their local schools. This assessment will help the department to determine the necessary steps and actions to improve the delivery of education across the region.

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

An independent investigation will help identify the current apprehensions, issues and trends that are impacting children and families attending their local school communities.

3. BACKGROUND

There are 16 government schools and facilities in the Arnhem area.

Government schools	
Alyangula Area School Comprehensive School. Student cohort has decreased by - 43, due to change in local mining operations	Alyarmandumanja Umbakumba School Comprehensive School
Angurugu School	Baniyala Garrangali School

Government schools	
Comprehensive School Decline in student enrolment and attendance by -21	Small School, Teaching principal Decline in student cohort by -23
Gapuwiyak School Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -26	Nhulunbuy High School (including the Dawurr Boarding School) Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -5
Maningrida College Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -55	Nhulunbuy Primary School Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -19
Milingimbi School Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -14	Numbulwar School Comprehensive School. Increase in student cohort by +10
Milyakburra School Small School - Teaching principal Decline in student cohort by -11	Ramingining School Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -9
Shepherdson College Comprehensive School. Decline in student cohort by -61	Warruwi School Increase in student cohort by +21
Yirrkala Homelands School Homeland Learning Centre. Decline in student cohort by -23.	Yirrkala School Comprehensive School. Increase in student cohort by +5
Non-government schools	
Gawa Christian School	Mapuru Christian School
Nhulunbuy Christian School	

4. PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the work to be undertaken by the investigator will include:

- What impact do the five social determinants pillars have on student enrolment and attendance?

Agreed five social determinants pillars to focus effort are:

- Healthy Children – Children are healthy and arrive at school ready to learn
- Empowered Families – Families are empowered to take an active role in their children’s education.
- Engaged Communities – Communities are engaged and able to take a leading role in driving education outcomes.
- Ready Schools – Schools are culturally safe and resourced to meet complex needs.
- Appropriate Services.

- What do we know about the student cohorts and attendance patterns in the Arnhem Region?
- What is the education pathway for students in the Arnhem Region?
- Identify any shortfalls and opportunities to ensure the ongoing viability of schools in the Arnhem Region. Identify what schools need to do differently and what could be improved outside the school gate.
- What are the attendance and disengaged trends in the Arnhem Region?
- What impact do disengaged students have on the communities in this region?
- Ensure that there are linkages to the Royal Commission into Protection and Detention of Children and the Royal Commission into Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

5. PROJECT DELIVERABLES

The Lead Investigator will be required to conduct entry, interim and exit meetings and provide written interim, draft and final report. The draft and final report will, at a minimum, contain:

- An executive summary, which will consist of the objectives, scope, approach taken and a summary of the key findings noted.
- Recommended options for consideration including realistic and appropriate strategies and timeframes for implementation.
 - Working with disengaged families.
 - Working with the vulnerable and at risk students.

The consultant may also be required to make a presentations of the final report to:

- Chief Executive, Department of Education and selected executives.

6. DELIVERY TIMEFRAMES

The Lead Investigator will be expected to commence the review within ten working days upon awarding of the contract, deliver an interim report within six weeks and a draft report within eight weeks. A final report will be provided within two weeks of receiving feedback from the Department of Education. The department's Schools North Directorate will be responsible for collating management responses to the interim and draft reports and will keep the consultant informed of further clarifications of findings needed.

7. LOGISTICS/TRAVEL

The investigations will require the consultations to be carried out at multiple locations across the region, as determined by the department. Department of Education's Schools North will coordinate and met cost of travel in accordance with the Northern Territory Government Travel Policy Framework.

8. DATA

The investigations will work with Department of Education's Performance and Data Management team to source relevant data, the Data Request Form to be approved by the Project Sponsor. All Information collected and stored by the department's employees and those acting on behalf of the department, is the property of the department. It is a corporate resource that is utilised wherever possible to improve student outcomes in educational programs and enhance strategic and operational data driven decision making. The Lead Investigator must be fully aware of the departments Data Access Policy and Data Access Protocol. The Lead Investigator will need to sign a Personal Deed of Confidentiality for an individual user.

9. INVOICE and PAYMENT SCHEDULES

The Lead Investigator will provide a tax invoice for part payment (20 per cent) on signing of agreement, further part payment (30 per cent) on issuance of the draft report and a further tax invoice for part payment (50 per cent) on issuance of the final report. The consultants are required to conduct entry, interim and exit meetings and provide written interim, draft and final report.

10. PART OFFERS

No part offers will be accepted.

11. PROJECT SPONSOR

Deputy Chief Executive Marion Guppy is the Department of Education Project Sponsor.