

2004-2005-2006-2007

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE (LEARNING TOGETHER – ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH  
CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY) AMENDMENT BILL 2007**

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

(Circulated by authority of the Minister for Education, Science and Training,  
the Honourable Julie Bishop MP)

# **SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE (LEARNING TOGETHER – ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY) AMENDMENT BILL 2007**

## **OUTLINE**

The purpose of the Bill is to amend the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004* (the Act), which provides funding for Australian Government programs of financial assistance to the States and Territories for government and non-government schools for the 2005 to 2008 quadrennium.

This Bill amends column 3 of Schedule 3 and Schedule 5 of the Act to include revised funding amounts for capital infrastructure grants for government schools for 2007 and non-government schools for 2007 and 2008. Capital infrastructure grants are provided under the Investing in Our Schools Program to fund small infrastructure projects in government and non-government schools. Funding appropriated for government schools will be amended to increase the original allocation for 2007 by \$127 million. The total funding amount for 2007 of \$362.38 million will reflect the existing funding for 2007. It will also reflect the movement of uncommitted capital infrastructure grant funding of \$48.713 million from 2006 to 2007 (Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Amendment Regulations 2006 (No. 3) made on 30 November 2006). The Bill appropriates an additional \$27 million in capital infrastructure grants for non-government schools for each of the program years 2007 and 2008.

The Bill will also amend column 2 of Schedule 5 of the Act to increase the funding amount for the 2008 program year for Capital Grants for non-government schools. This will continue the current level of funding to the end of the quadrennium.

The Bill will also amend column 6 of Schedule 9 of the Act to include funding for the 2008 program year for Grants for Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs – Grants for National Projects, to provide continued support for disadvantaged students.

Funding amounts are expressed in initial 2005 prices, the price basis of the Act.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The Bill reflects an expense of \$181 million in additional funding for capital infrastructure grants for government and non-government schools for the 2005-2008 funding quadrennium.

Other proposed amendments have no financial impact on the 2005-2008 quadrennium. Funding is included in forward estimates.

# **SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE (LEARNING TOGETHER – ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITY) AMENDMENT BILL 2007**

## **NOTES ON CLAUSES**

### **Clause 1 – Short title**

Provides for the Act to be cited as the *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Amendment Act 2007*.

### **Clause 2 – Commencement**

Provides for the Act to commence on the day on which it receives Royal Assent.

### **Clause 3 – Schedule(s)**

Provides that each Act that is specified in a Schedule is amended or repealed as set out in the applicable items in the Schedule, and that any other item in a Schedule has effect according to its terms.

## **Schedule 1 — Amendments**

### ***Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Act 2004***

#### **Items 1 and 2 - Schedule 3 (cells at table items 2 and 3, column 3)**

Schedule 3 deals with capital grants for government schools and sets out maximum amounts that may be paid for capital and capital infrastructure (Investing in Our Schools Program) grants.

**Item 1** amends column 3 of table item 2 in Schedule 3 to insert the correct amount for the program year 2006 which becomes \$429,520,000. This amount is less than what was originally appropriated for the 2006 program year because it reflects the movement of uncommitted capital infrastructure grant funding of \$48.713 million from the 2006 to the 2007 program year as a result of regulations made by the Governor-General on 30 November 2006 under section 123A of the Act. The regulations were the Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Amendment Regulations 2006 (No. 3).

The regulation making power in section 123A of the Act allows the movement of uncommitted or unspent funds between program years without having to amend the Act. The power provides flexibility but does not allow a unilateral increase in overall funding.

**Item 2** amends column 3 of table item 3 in Schedule 3 to insert the amount for the program year 2007. Column 3 of table item 3 becomes \$362,380,000. This amount reflects the current funding for the 2007 program year of \$186,667,000, the movement of uncommitted or unspent funds of \$48,713,000 from the 2006 program year and the additional funding for the 2007 program year of \$127,000,000.

#### **Items 3 and 4 – Schedule 5 (cells at table item 3, column 3 and table item 4)**

Schedule 5 deals with capital grants for non-government schools and sets out maximum amounts that may be paid for capital and capital infrastructure (Investing in Our Schools Program) grants.

**Items 3 and 4** amend table items 3 and 4 respectively of the table in Schedule 5 to insert amounts for the program years 2007 and 2008. Column 3 of table item 3 becomes \$107,000,000 (capital infrastructure grants for the 2007 program year). Column 2 of table item 4 becomes \$101,838,000 (capital grants for the 2008 program year) and column 3 of table item 4 becomes \$107,000,000 (capital infrastructure grants for the 2008 program year).

#### **Item 5 – Part 1 of Schedule 9 (cell at table item 4, column 6)**

Schedule 9 deals with grants for literacy, numeracy and special learning needs and column 6 of table item 4 in Part 1 of the Schedule deals specifically with grants for national projects.

**Item 5** amends column 6 of table item 4 in Schedule 9 to insert an amount for the 2008 program year. Column 6 of table item 4 becomes \$9,445,000.