The Parliament of the
Commonwealth of Australia

THE SENATE

Social Security and Veterans’ Entitlements
Legislation Amendment (Schooling Requirements)
Bill 2008

(Amendments to be moved by Senator Siewert on behalf of the Australian Greens in committee of the whole)

(1) Schedule 1, item 6, page 5 (after line 26), after the heading to division 1, insert:

124AA Application
(1) This Part applies only in respect of attendance at a school in a declared community.
(2) The Minister may, by legislative instrument, determine that a community is a declared community for the purposes of this section.
(3) For the purposes of this section, a community may be:
   (a) a named rural or urban population centre with no more than 15 schools in the affected area; or
   (b) a region defined by geographical boundaries with a population not exceeding 10 000 people.
(4) The Minister may determine no more than eight communities to be declared communities for the purposes of this section.
(5) A determination made under subsection (2) ceases to have effect 12 months after it commences, at which time this Part ceases to apply in respect of that community.

(2) Schedule 1, item 6, page 5 (after line 26), after the heading to division 1, insert:

124AB Review of operation of Part
(1) The Minister must cause an independent review of the operation of this Part to be conducted as soon as possible after the first anniversary of the commencement of this Part and completed within 4 months of that anniversary.
(2) The review must report on:
(a) changes in truancy rates against baseline data and against comparable populations outside the trial areas;
(b) changes in truancy rates for families within affected communities based on income source and family type;
(c) comparison to outcomes of incentive-based initiatives;
(d) number of notifications given, how quickly families responded and number of families breached;
(e) impacts on the circumstances and well-being of those families involved including financial hardship, use of emergency support services, loss of housing or utilities, impacts on other children, family conflict;
(f) impacts on social services within the region including level of demand, level of services delivered, changes in the types of services delivered and level of unmet services;
(g) impacts on schools including concerns of teachers and principals, level of demand on school services, and changes in relationships between schools and families;
(h) impact on and level of service delivered by State or Territory education departments to support children at risk, teachers and families to tackle truancy;
(i) relative impacts on Indigenous and non-Indigenous families;
(j) relative impacts on migrant families, particularly humanitarian migrants within the Cannington region;
(k) the level of awareness and understanding of the measures of affected families;
(l) factors relating to the interaction with welfare quarantining and child protection measures;
(m) any other matters considered relevant.

(3) The review must be conducted by a panel which must comprise not less than 5 persons, including:
   (a) a person with expertise in child development;
   (b) a person with expertise in primary and secondary education;
   (c) a person with expertise in child protection;
   (d) a person with expertise in community services;
   (e) a person with expertise in Indigenous communities;
   (f) a person with expertise in humanitarian migrant communities.

(4) The panel must give the Minister a written report of the review, and the Minister must cause a copy of the report to be tabled in each House of the Parliament within 15 sitting days of receiving the report.

[review of operation]

(3) Schedule 1, item 6, page 5 (after line 26), after the heading to division 1, insert:

124AB Interpretation of notice requirements

Despite any other provision in this Part:
(a) any notice given by the Secretary to a schooling requirement person in accordance with this Part must be in plain English or in the language of the person;
(b) where a period of time is determined under this Part by reference to the giving of a notice to a person, the period of time does not commence until:
   (i) the notice is received by the person; and
(ii) the person has had an opportunity to meet with Centrelink staff.

[notice requirements]