States Grants (Schools Assistance) Amendment Bill 1987

Date Introduced: 29 April 1987
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Hon. John Dawkins, M.P., Minister Representing the Minister for Education

Digest of Bill

Purpose
To amend the States Grants (Schools Assistance) Act 1984 (the Principal Act) to adjust grants to schools for cost increases, to allow for block grants and to exclude full-fee paying overseas students from eligibility for recurrent grants.

Background
The Federal Government provides assistance to the States and Northern Territory for both government and private schools through the Principal Act. Under the funding arrangements, grants are adjusted retrospectively to compensate for cost increases.

Two changes to the schools assistance scheme have been announced in recent times. First, full-fee paying overseas students are to be excluded from the calculation of the number of students upon which recurrent grants are based. Secondly, capital grants for non-government schools will be allocated as a block for internal distribution by authorities established for this purpose. For example, it is expected that Catholic schools in each State will form blocks.

Main Provisions
Section 5 of the Principal Act provides for an annual amount to be payable for each new student of English as a second language. Clause 4 will increase the amount of the grant by $22 to $1011.

Clause 7 will insert a new section 11A into the Principal Act to exclude full-fee paying overseas students from the calculation of the number of students for general recurrent grants to government schools.

A new section 25A will be inserted into the Principal Act to allow the Minister to approve corporations as a block grant authority in relation to the schools specified in the instrument. Such approval may be subject to conditions. In addition, proposed section 25B will allow the Minister to approve, for 1988 and subsequent years, building and equipment grants for non-government schools on a block basis. Grants are not to be approved for co-educational schools unless the Minister is of the opinion that the facilities will, as far as is practicable, be equally available to students of both sexes. Similarly, grants are not to be approved for projects where the principal ob
ject is to provide residential accommodation for teachers or other staff or facilities for use, wholly or partly, for or in relation to religious worship (clause 8).

The limit on grants to non-government schools for building and equipment projects in 1987 will be increased by $70,000 to $2.937 million (clause 9 which will amend section 27 of the Principal Act).

Clauses 10 and 11 will insert new sections 28C and 29C respectively into the Principal Act to exclude full-fee paying overseas students from the calculation of certain grants.

Section 53 limits the amount of grants available for building and equipment grants for schools serving predominantly Aboriginal communities. The limit on grants for 1987 will be increased by $147,000 to $6.21 million for government schools and by $58,000 to $2.483 million for non-government schools (clause 12).

The limit on grants for special education projects of national significance for 1987 will be increased by $4000 to $208,000 (clause 13 which will amend section 70C of the Principal Act).

Clause 14 will substitute new Schedules into the Principal Act to take account of increases in grants.

For further information, if required, contact the Education and Welfare Group.

7 May 1987

Bills Digest Service
Legislative Research Service

This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.

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