

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**ANSWERS TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS**

Department of Education

Hon Dr Brad Pettitt MLC asked:

- 1) I refer to the item 24 under the Asset Investment Program, 2021 Election Commitments on page 371 of the Western Australia State Budget Paper 2, Volume 1. The \$5 million program will benefit 30 schools and is claimed to create 12 new full time jobs, 2 new Aboriginal electrical apprenticeships, and reduce Western Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by over 2000 tonnes per year – which is one of the most significant actions of the Western Australian Climate Policy. I ask:

a) Why is the program limited to only 30 schools;

Answer:

In September 2020, the McGowan Government announced a \$5 million Solar Schools Program, to provide rooftop solar systems to 30 regional public schools across WA.

In February 2021, the McGowan Government announced \$4.6 million will go to Horizon Power to install solar panels in a further 28 schools across the Kimberley (18) and Pilbara (10) regions as part of the Solar Schools Program.

As part of the Schools Clean Energy Technology Fund, commencing in November 2021-22, all public schools in Western Australia will be able to apply to receive smart solar panels or other energy efficiency measures.

b) What are the Government's plans to extend the program to all public schools in Western Australia; and

Answer:

All public schools in Western Australia will be able to apply for the Schools Clean Energy Technology Fund commencing in November 2021-22, to receive smart solar panels or other energy efficiency measures, depending on the assessment of their eligibility and suitability.

c) What is the expected job creation and effect on reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for a state-wide program?

Answer:

The Department anticipates this investment will create a pipeline of continued work opportunities over the life of the fund.

Reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions will be monitored and captured annually, based on the number of schools receiving funding and the extent to which this might be distributed, with benchmarking having already been undertaken. This will involve the Department of Education working with key stakeholders such as Energy Policy WA, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Synergy and Horizon Power.

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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**ANSWERS TO [IDENTIFY IF IT IS QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING, SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION OR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS]**

Department of Education

Hon Dr Brad Pettitt MLC asked:

2) I refer to the line item listing the Schools Clean Energy Program under New Works, Election Commitments page 376 of the Western Australia State Budget Paper 2, Volume 1. I ask:

a) What are the expected deliverables of this spend;

Answer:

The Schools Clean Energy Technology Fund progresses the McGowan Government's \$44.6 million election commitment to lower energy costs for WA public schools and reduce emissions.

The Fund will go toward the installation of new energy technologies in Western Australian public schools, including more rooftop solar systems and Virtual Power Plants (VPPs); and implementing a range of energy-efficiency measures.

b) How many schools will benefit from this spend;

Answer:

Of the \$44.6 million in funding, \$4.6 million will deliver solar systems to 28 regional schools. \$4.8 million will be used to expand the Schools VPP pilot program across a further six schools. The remaining funding will be used for a new program that all schools can apply for.

c) What are the anticipated reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from this spend;

Answer:

Reductions in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions from this spending will be monitored and reported on annually, with benchmarking having already been undertaken. This will involve the Department of Education working with key stakeholders such as Energy Policy WA, Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, Synergy and Horizon Power.

d) What is the overlap of this program with the schools virtual power plant program pilot; and

Answer:

As part of the Schools Clean Energy Technology Fund, \$4.8 million has been allocated to a further trial of VPPs in regional areas.

This is an expansion of the Schools VPP pilot program which was initially funded by \$4 million through the McGowan Government's WA Recovery Plan.

The additional \$4.8 million will be used to transform six more schools into VPPs across the Kalgoorlie and Geraldton areas.

e) Will the pilot be extended to all schools if deemed successful, over what timeframe, and at what cost?

Future investment decisions on will be made on the findings of the pilot program.

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