

ASSISTANCE TO INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN THE AUSTRALIAN  
CAPITAL TERRITORY AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Statement by the Prime Minister, Sir Robert  
Menzies in the House of Representatives on  
10th November, 1965

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The Commonwealth has adopted a new policy to assist independent schools in the Australian Capital Territory and in the Northern Territory to finance the construction of primary and secondary school buildings and associated facilities.

For the last ten years, the Australian Government has been helping this construction in the Australian Capital Territory by paying a subsidy up to the long term bond rate towards meeting the interest charges incurred by independent schools when they borrowed money for construction. This assistance was first paid for construction of facilities in secondary schools and, more recently, has been paid for both primary and secondary schools.

In future the Government will continue to meet interest charges on approved borrowings of capital, but will also repay the amounts of capital borrowed for approved projects. Capital repayments will be made by equal annual instalments over a period of twenty years. The same assistance will be extended to schools in the Northern Territory, with the exception of mission schools which have special characteristics and for which special Commonwealth assistance exists already.

The Government believes that this arrangement will assist independent schools in the two Territories both by removing the necessity for such schools to repay capital themselves and by enabling them to borrow at reasonable rates of interest.

The increased assistance will apply both to approved projects constructed or begun over the next ten years and also to a group of projects now under construction or on the point of starting. For schools in the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory, the new form of assistance will replace, for the future, assistance now available to provide science teaching laboratories and equipment.

In each case where assistance is given, the Australian Government will need to be satisfied that the proposed facilities are needed and will require that details such as the standards of construction, the area of land around the school, and the borrowing arrangements, be approved by it.

The increased assistance will not apply to projects already built under the previous scheme.

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