

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

Outcome 2 - Schools and Youth

Department of Education Question No. ED0317_15

Senator Collins asked on 4 June 2014, Hansard page 97

Question

Negotiation of bilateral agreements

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: When I got your answer to question No. 8, I must admit I remained confused. On the one hand, the Commonwealth said, 'Key components of that agreement we're not going to meet.' But on the other hand, as you explained to us, the bilateral agreements made between the Commonwealth and each of New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT remain in place. I do not understand how those two can sit together. If it is just that there is a time lag and that the Commonwealth will be seeking to amend those agreements, that is one issue. But I do not understand how those agreements can still stand given the Commonwealth's current policy position and its implementation in the budget. Senator Payne: The point of the implementation from the budget is the key observation that you make. The formality of that brings the issue to the fore now. Senator JACINTA COLLINS: So we can anticipate, then, that the Commonwealth will seek to amend the agreements? Mr Cook: I think the minister has been very clear about negotiating. In fact, it says that in the budget paper around formal negotiation. I would anticipate that the formal negotiation would include discussions in relation to existing agreements. Senator Payne: Why do I not seek advice on that from the minister? Senator JACINTA COLLINS: That would be helpful, because the response to that question, which is simply the bilateral agreements remain in place, I think is—I do not say deliberately—misleading at best. Senator Payne: I will take that on notice and do that.

Answer

Bilateral inter-governmental agreements on schools funding will be reviewed as part of the formal negotiations on the schools funding arrangements to apply from 2018.