

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Agency – Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority

**Department of Education Question No. ED0041_14
Senator Carr provided in writing.**

Question - ACARA - election commitment to refocus

Has ACARA received any communication from the Minister about his election commitment to 'refocus' the agency? When was the communication received? Is an implementation plan in place? And when will the 'refocus' commence? Can the roles and responsibilities of ACARA be altered without changes to the ACARA Act, and/or the agreement of State and Territory Ministers? How are the statements by Ms Paul consistent with the Government's commitment to 'refocus' the agency? What changes if ACARA 'continues doing what it has been doing'?

On 20 November 2013, the Education and Employment Legislation Committee heard:

Ms Paul: ACARA continues as a statutory agency.

Senator O'Neill: In what form and what shape?

Ms Paul: In the form that it has been, in terms of its main functions. Some of its functions will come into the department, but basically it continues doing what it has been doing by way of curriculum and so on.

Answer

ACARA has provided the following response.

ACARA has not received any written communication from the Australian Government about refocusing the agency. Representatives of ACARA have met with the Minister to discuss a range of matters including the Government's election policy.

Until formal direction is received from the Standing Council (including changes to ACARA's Charter¹) or changes are made to the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority Act 2008*, ACARA will continue with its current work programme as endorsed by the Standing Council, i.e., "ACARA continues doing what it has been doing".

Department of Education as provided the following response.

Any changes to the functions of ACARA are currently under consideration by the Government.

¹ *ACARA Act*, s7 Considerations governing the performance of functions

(1) The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority must perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with any directions given to it by the Ministerial Council in writing.

Note: For how directions are given see: section 42. For directions relating to reporting requirements see: subsection 43(3).

(2) Directions under subsection (1) must not be inconsistent with:

(a) this Act or the regulations under this Act; or

(b) the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, or regulations or instruments made under

that Act.

(3) The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority must also perform its functions and exercise its powers in accordance with the Charter.

