

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

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

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Department of Education Question No. ED0183_14

Senator Tillem asked on 20 November 2013 , Hansard page 62

Question

Data regarding fee increases

Senator TILLEM: Can you outline for us the fee increases between 1996 and 2007, and then what the increases were from 2007 to 2013? Ms Caldwell: We would have to take it on notice to go back that far. Senator TILLEM: That is fair enough. Mr Cook: To clarify, do you mean from one end year to another or do you mean by financial year in between that as well? Senator TILLEM: What I want to know is the fee increases from 1996 to 2007. Mr Cook: So the two end years. Senator TILLEM: Yes, and for the second period as well: 2007 to 2013. Mr Cook: Sure. Ms Paul: We may not have it, of course, because it is such dated data and the responsibility has moved around. We will certainly give it our best shot. Senator TILLEM: I am sure there is in your data collection which is well-known across the world there will be some data that will assist us in our inquiries. Ms Paul: We will try our best. Senator TILLEM: You might have to take this on notice: in terms of comparing fee increases over various governments—this is actually where I want to get to—I am inquiring, essentially, about the bottom line in fee increases over various government from the Howard government to the Gillard-Rudd period, so that we can have a comparison of where child care sat in relation to the effect of fee increases to families. Ms Paul: We will take it on notice to look at particular dates. Senator TILLEM: That will be comprehensive in its data provision, so that we could have a look at that, within the frame of assessing going forward some of the changes that have been outlined in the terms of reference for the new government; also, a query in relation to CPI increases in childcare fees for that period as well. They are all obviously interlinked. Ms Wilson: For the same period? Senator TILLEM: Yes.

Answer

The Department of Education is unable to calculate the increase in fees between 1996 and 2007 as it does not have child care fee data back to 1996. The average hourly fee increased by 47.7 per cent from December quarter 2007 to March quarter 2013 (latest available).

The Child Care Consumer Price Index is derived by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and is available at www.abs.gov.au, ABS Catalogue No. 6401.0.