

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

26 February 2014

Question: AET 2993

**Topic: Productivity Commission
– Inquiry on Childcare and Early Childhood Learning**

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Senator PRATT asked:

2993. If you are trying to do this inquiry without that money and given the tight time frame, can the commission provide some detail about how it plans to quantify the cost and benefit of early learning? We are familiar with workforce participation. We know you do that. But how will you calculate quality of child care and the value of early childhood development when looking at the benefit to government and to society in the longer term?

Answer:

2993. The Commission will be considering the evidence of the benefits of early childhood education and care for childhood development and the extent to which these benefits, where they exist, have been found to persist into the longer term. There are very few Australian studies which examine the longer term benefits of early childhood education and care. We will therefore need to draw on any relevant longitudinal studies undertaken overseas. Most of these studies highlight the importance of the quality of care and family characteristics in determining the extent and nature of benefits from early childhood education and care.

Information on the costs of providing early childhood education and care are more readily available and the Commission will be drawing on information in government administrative datasets, budget information and estimates provided to us by the sector.