

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2007-2008 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome

DEST Question No. E127_08

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

1. Does DEST have policy responsibility for early childhood education?
2. Is this shared with FACSIA? If so, what is the division of responsibility between the agencies?
3. Is there any Interdepartmental Committees of which DEST is a member whose terms of reference include early childhood education or preschool? If so, what are those terms of reference, what is the membership of the committee, and on what dates has the committee met in the last 12 months?

Answer:

Early Childhood Education

- 1 & 2. The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) has primary policy responsibility for early childhood, including child care and other financial support such as family tax benefit and programmes to support families with children.

Delivery of preschool education is the responsibility of state and territory governments. The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) provides policy advice on early childhood education to the Australian Government. DEST also supports the delivery of preschool education by funding preschool initiatives and providing per capita supplementary funding to support the participation of Indigenous children in preschool education. In 2006, this funding provided under the *Indigenous Education Targeted Assistance Act* was \$12.3 million. This includes \$5 million to broaden the Parent School Partnership Initiatives Programme to include a specific early childhood focus.

3. DEST was a member of the Human Capital Interdepartmental Committee chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. This committee's work included consideration of early childhood education and preschool issues. The membership list and meeting dates for the Human Capital Interdepartmental Committee are attached.

Interdepartmental Committee	Membership	Meeting dates (1 Jun 06 - 29 May 07)
Human Capital Interdepartmental Committee	Representatives from Australian Government: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs • Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet • Department of Finance and Administration • Department of Health and Ageing • Department of Education, Science and Training • Treasury • Department of Human Services • Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 	5 June 2006 19 June 2006 5 July 2006 17 July 2006 25 July 2006 16 August 2006 24 August 2006 12 September 2006 20 September 2006 6 October 2006 17 October 2006 27 October 2006 9 November 2006 16 November 2006 24 November 2006 18 December 2006 24 January 2007 2 February 2007 28 March 2007 18 April 2007 4 May 2007