

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

Outcome 1 – Early Childhood, Working Age and Indigenous Participation

DEEWR Question No. EW0357_13

Senator Nash asked on 30 May 2012, Hansard page 59

Question

Cost of Upskilling

Senator NASH: All right. Would you mind taking on notice to provide the federal funding as it applies to, as you were saying earlier, the cost of the recognition of prior learning, the cost of upskilling and how that process works. That would be useful. Ms Taylor: Certainly. There were other measures that went to the broadening of the HECS-HELP benefit and particular discounts for early childhood education teachers—broadening the postcode areas that that applied to, because it was a measure that was aimed at getting early childhood education teachers in regional areas. The postcode range has been broadened to pick up more regional areas as well. So I can give you a list of all of those; I will take that on notice. Senator NASH: That would be really useful, thank you.

Answer

In the 2011–12 Budget the Australian Government announced \$9.2 million for a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative to improve the quality and uptake of RPL assessments for early childhood professionals. The initiative includes:

- development of new national RPL assessment tools for Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children’s Services
- training 600 existing RPL assessors in the use of the new toolkit
- RPL assessment grants of up to \$1125 for rural and remote early childhood educators to contribute to out-of-pocket expenses such as travel, accommodation and meals associated with accessing an RPL assessment.

Existing RPL assessors working in Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) with a proven capacity to deliver high quality RPL assessments have been selected to participate in the RPL initiative and receive training in contemporary RPL practices and the use of the new national RPL assessment toolkit. At the completion of training DEEWR Registered RPL Assessors are able to undertake assessments.

Early childhood educators can apply for an RPL assessment grant. Grant applications are available on the Department’s website www.deewr.gov.au/rpl. Assessors can either travel to an early childhood service to conduct an RPL assessment on multiple early childhood educators or the early childhood educator can travel to the RPL Assessor.

The cost of upskilling varies widely depending on the type of qualification, the training provider selected to deliver the training and the early childhood educator's location.

To further encourage and support early childhood teachers working in areas of high need, the Government has expanded the existing HECS-HELP Benefit for early childhood education teachers to cover all rural and remote areas, including regional cities, as well areas of high disadvantage, based on postcode location.

A list of all eligible postcodes is at [Attachment A](#).