

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. EW0368_13

Senator McKenzie asked on 30 May 2012, Hansard page 70

Question:

Flexible Offerings

Senator McKENZIE: Excellent. We just heard about some trials that occurred around flexible offerings. I am wondering about the educative rationale of the different models and whether that has been assessed.

Ms Taylor: It was work undertaken by the Victorian government working with councils. I can take that on notice and see. I have not been able to get from the government exactly the rationale behind that.

Senator McKENZIE: Great. Thank you.

Answer:

By 2013 early childhood education programs for children in the year prior to full-time schooling are to be delivered by a university qualified early childhood teacher, in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework, for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year. Provided children have access to 600 hours of early childhood education in the year prior to full-time schooling, the precise configuration of the timing of the delivery of the hours is flexible, as long as they are appropriate to the circumstances, for example balancing parents' needs, location, workforce considerations and operational needs.

The Victorian Government piloted different models of kindergarten program delivery during 2010-2011. In May 2012 the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development published information about *'moving to 15 hours of Kindergarten'* at <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/universalaccess/movingto15hrsinfosheet.pdf>. The site provides information about the pilot programs of 15 hours of kindergarten currently being trialled and details a range of flexible program delivery options.

An evaluation of the pilots for Rounds 1 and 2 of the 15 hour kindergarten programs in Victoria is currently being conducted by the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.