

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 2

**Output Group:** 2.2 – New Apprenticeships

#### DEST Question No. E603\_07

Senator Wong provided in writing.

#### Question:

- (a) Has the Department undertaken any analysis, or been involved in any interdepartmental working groups or committees analysing, the extent of workforce shortages in the child care industry? If so, who conducted this analysis? What were the findings?
- (b) Has the Department developed any policy or initiatives to increase the number of Australians studying for early childhood degrees or diplomas?

#### Answer:

##### *Workforce Shortages in the Child Care Industry*

- (a) The Department has not undertaken nor been involved in any analysis of workforce shortages in the child care industry.
- (b) Since 1 July 2006, the:
  - Diploma of Children's Services (Code CHC50302);
  - Advanced Diploma of Children's Services (Code CHC60202); and
  - Diploma of Out of Schools Hours Care (Code CHC50202)

among other Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications, have attracted employer incentives under the *Australian Apprenticeships Incentive Programme* for new employees without prior qualifications at Certificate III or higher level (as a general rule).

Under the programme, employers receive incentive payments of \$1,500 for each employee commencing a targeted Diploma or Advanced Diploma programme and \$2,500 when they complete the qualification.

From 1 January 2007 under the *Incentives for Higher Technical Skills* initiative, as part of the *Skills for the Future* package, the rules governing the incentives in relation to Diploma and Advanced Diploma level qualifications will be amended to remove the eligibility restrictions in relation to existing workers and prior qualifications (up to and including Certificate IV), and to expand the number of eligible qualifications, which will open the programme up to a greater number of workers.

The Australian Government recently allocated new Commonwealth supported higher education places to higher education providers to commence in 2007. The allocation focussed on areas of skills shortages and included 650 teaching places, with 75 of these allocated to courses specific to early childhood education.