Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace Relations

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011

Agency - ACARA

DEEWR Question No.EW0499_11

Senator Fifield provided in writing.

Question

NAPLAN TESTING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

Does the Government have any plans to implement NAPLAN testing at schools that cater for children with disability?

Answer

ACARAhas provided the following response.

Under current arrangements all students are given the opportunity to participate in testing, unless their parent/caregiver elects to withdraw them from testing, or, because they qualify for an exemption due to:

· significant intellectual and/or functional disability or
· being a recently arrived migrant (within the last 12 months) from a non-English speaking background.

Where assistance can be provided to enable students with a disability or disabilities to participate in NAPLAN testing, it is the responsibility of the state/territory testing authority and schools to make reasonable accommodations to facilitate their participation.

Currently there is a range of provisions available to students with disabilities including special test materials for sight impaired students, assistive technology where this has been used as a normal part of their classroom work environment, support through persons such as scribes, readers and the like.

As to future plans, ACARA's mandate is set by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA). To date MCEECDYA has not directed ACARA to consider reviewing the existing arrangements. However, ACARA is investigating measures that could be taken at a national level to enhance student participation and is working cooperatively with all states and territories to achieve greater understanding of options available to students, to increase the consistency of provisions nationally, and to increase the quality of communication to school principals to support them in making decisions about provisions.