

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 4 - Employment

DEEWR Question No. EW0717_12

Senator Wright provided in writing.

Question

More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative

"On 3 May 2011, the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, announced the More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative. This initiative "forms part of the 2011–12 Federal Budget and will provide benefits to teachers and schools to better support students with disabilities. The Government is providing \$200 million to this exciting initiative designed to generate real and tangible improvements to the individual learning experiences of students with disabilities. Funding will be allocated to government and non-government education authorities for services delivered in the 2012 and 2013 school years." A sibling's schooling can also be affected by having a brother or sister with disability. Siblings can also play a significant role in supporting a brother or sister with disability. However, siblings are not considered in this initiative.

1. Does DEEWR have any plans to include the role and needs of siblings in its consideration of children with disability at school?

Answer

On 6 September 2011, Minister Garrett announced the formation of the Schools Disability Advisory Council, which will provide advice to the Australian Government, through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, on issues affecting school aged children and young people with disability and their families, teachers and carers. The Council will also provide advice on policy development and implementation of school education programs and initiatives that aim to improve the educational outcomes, social inclusion, resilience and wellbeing of school students with disability and learning difficulties.

Membership of the Council has now been determined. It will include members from peak organisations representing people with disabilities and educators, as well as academic experts and individuals living with disability. The Council will also include representatives of parents and families of children and young people with disability.

Minister Garrett recently approved the provision of funding to Children with Disability Australia for an Education Policy Officer. As part of their role the Education Policy Officer will provide feedback to Government on school education policy and program implementation concerning the needs of children and young people with disability and their families, including siblings.

In addition, the Positive Partnerships initiative provides an information session on siblings' issues at the face to face parent/carer workshops, as well as an on-line

interactive module available for parents and teachers. This material, developed in partnership with Siblings Australia, provides information to parents, carers and teachers in relation to meeting the needs of siblings of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.