

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

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

**Agency - Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0705\_13**

**Senator Mason asked on 18 October 2012 , Hansard page 30**

**Question**

**ACARA - Common definition of disability**

Senator MASON: I do not think this is a big issue but in the ACARA annual report for 2009-10, the CEO said in his report that ACARA was involved in developing a common definition of disability. What work was done? Mr Randall: That is work that was undertaken with DEEWR and also state and territory authorities. It has now translated and been taken up in terms of some of the disability funding work and others. It is drawing upon current practice in terms of how people have defined them and identified them. As with many of these things nationally we have found that, while there is broad agreement, unless you can settle on some greater agreement about things you might miss those, so there is that ongoing definition work. We have been party to that because it is important to our work in terms of the My School website and in terms of talking about young people's participation in NAPLAN and the like. Senator MASON: Did you come up with a definition? What happened? Mr Randall: I am happy to take notice where we have finally got to.

**Answer**

ACARA has provided the following response.

DEEWR is leading the work to develop a common definition of disability. ACARA has been involved through the relevant working group, including in 2009/2010.

At the 20 April 2012 meeting of SCSEEC, ministers accepted revised descriptors for collecting nationally consistent data on students with a disability. Ministers also agreed that the business case and implementation strategy for this model will have the objective of a full national data collection in 2013, informed by the trial of the revised descriptors in the second half of 2012.

The Joint Working Group on Nationally Consistent Data Collection on Students with Disability (JWGSWD) is overseeing the trial collection, which is currently underway.

The JWGSWD recently proposed that 2013 will be a transition year and data collection in that year will not be made available for reporting. Through the JWGSWD, ACARA is working through a range of issues in collaboration with DEEWR, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and state and territory education departments. These are mainly logistical issues, but also include possible ways of depicting this data on the *My School* website.

In 2013, ACARA, through its own governance arrangements, including ACARA's Reporting Reference Group (RRG), will draw on initial discussions of the JWGSWD and explore in greater detail options for appropriate representations of this data on *My School*.