

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-21 October 2010

Question: PM77

Asked By: Senator Payne

Topic: National Indigenous Reform Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 3 December 2010

Number of pages:

With regard to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09:

- a) **What is the status of negotiations on developing national and jurisdictional trajectories to meet the Closing the Gap targets? When are they expected to be released?**
- b) **How is COAG addressing the urgent need to develop a means for measuring Indigenous access to early childhood education, as per Recommendation 3 of the report?**

Answer:

a) The work on trajectories is being undertaken by the NIRA Performance Information Management Group. The national trajectories will be provided to the COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform (WGIR), as a revised schedule to the National Indigenous Reform Agreement (NIRA), for its consideration in December 2010. Following consideration by WGIR, the amended NIRA will progress to COAG for agreement. The trajectories will then become publicly available. The trajectories will also be provided to the COAG Reform Council in December 2010.

The jurisdictional trajectories will not be included in the NIRA, but will also be publicly available.

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b) The Commonwealth is working with the States and Territories and major data agencies such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to address this issue through the National Information Agreement on Early Childhood Education and Care (NIA ECEC).

The NIA ECEC is being used by the parties to guide the development of a national early childhood education and care data collection (conducted by the ABS) to support monitoring and reporting on the COAG reforms in early childhood, including the Closing the Gap target for Indigenous children in remote communities.

It is anticipated that data from that collection will be able to be used for this purpose from 2011 (reporting early in 2012). The collection for 2010 (reporting early in 2011) is a transition year; it is not anticipated that the 2010 data will be sufficiently robust to report performance data such as enrolment rates.

Recently, under annual reporting arrangements agreed for the National Partnership on Early Childhood Education, the Commonwealth has reported data from the National Preschool Census for 2009 and ABS population projections, at:

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/ECUA/Pages/annualreports.aspx