

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-001004

Senator Collins, Jacinta asked on 20 October 2016, Proof Hansard page 85

Child care package and the funding gap

Question

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: In relation to the child care package and the funding gap, how big is the funding gap that the government is now looking to bridge post the omnibus savings bill?

Senator Birmingham: Senator Collins, we would have to take on notice the final estimates of the FTB saves that have been realised as a result of the omnibus bill passing versus those that remain to be realised.

Ms Wilson: I think that is still being reconciled, Minister. We will have to take that on notice.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: In terms of taking it on notice, I am responding in part to an interview in The Guardian politics live podcast, where the minister indicated, 'Christian Porter and I have had discussions with a number of crossbenchers about whether there is a way to bridge that gap', so I am seeking to quantify what we believe that gap to currently be, 'and/or whether there is a way to take some of the costs off the childcare model so we can come up with an overall mutual approach.' Senator Birmingham, I think you warned that it may or could be trimmed a little if savings were insufficient.

Senator Birmingham: We have always been clear that the reforms need to be budget neutral and need to be paid for, so we are working through how that is achieved and realised.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: You have taken on notice how big the funding gap is post the omnibus savings bill. As part of that, could you please tell me—I think that is the same question, really—how many of the omnibus savings measures relate to the childcare package. Has the department looked at specific options for closing the gap to date?

Senator Birmingham: We will have to take that on notice and probably seek some information from the Department of Social Services in responding to that.

Answer

The Australian Government has been clear that the Family Tax Benefit reforms are required to fund the increased investment in child care support under the *Jobs for Families Child Care Package*.