

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014**

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

**Department of Education Question No. ED0150_14
Senator Xenophon provided in writing.**

**Question
Early Years Quality Fund**

1. What is the department's position on the Early Years Quality Fund special account?
2. How many centres have qualified for these payments?
3. Is the fund fully allocated?
4. Was there a requirement for providers to have an EA in place to receive the payments?
5. Was a certain percentage of staff union membership required to receive the payments?
6. Is the department aware that a union claimed this was the case?
7. Has the department or government taken any action in this regard?

Answer

1. The department administers the policies of the government of the day
2. 453 letters of conditional offer were to sent to providers.
3. No.
4. Yes.
5. Union membership was not a requirement of the EYQF.
6. Yes.
7. The department took a number of steps to address alleged misinformation by unions including:
 - revising its Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Departmental website regarding eligibility for the EYQF.
 - writing to the National Secretary of United Voice on 11 April 2013 requesting that the FAQs be forwarded to United Voice officials and delegates to ensure accurate information was being relayed to the sector.
 - writing to all long day care services on 18 April 2013 to reiterate that the only source of definitive information regarding the operation of the EYQF was the Departmental website and that FAQs had been updated to include information that union membership was not a requirement for EYQF eligibility.