

Education and Employment Legislation Committee

The committee met on Wednesday, 22 October 2014 from 9.01 am to 11.01 pm.

The committee called the department and agencies of the Education portfolio, including the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), Australian National University, Australian Research Council and the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Among other issues, the following matters were discussed:

- travel arrangements for the Minister for Education to visit London and Rome
- red tape, staffing levels and a job description for the deregulation unit specific to the Department of Education
- how phonics feature in the national curriculum
- the timeline and requirements for the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) to be online and standards that need to be met
- the contribution of the new chair of AITSL
- the rearticulation of the ARC's medical research policy with the National Health and Medical Research Council
- staffing levels at TEQSA and the effects that the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014 would have if passed
- the ANU's domestic equity investments and the steps the ANU is taking to grow its endowment fund
- the consultation process for the Family Day Care changes
- the allocation of \$9 million for the early learning language trial in preschools and the participation of 400,000 preschool children in the trial
- the functions of the Child Care Payments Compliance Branch
- the consultation process relating to the National Quality Framework and the timeframe for the release of the final report
- students with disabilities, including the upcoming change to disability loading and the consultation undertaken by the government regarding the reforms
- the new criteria for the School Chaplaincy program following the High Court's second *Williams* decision, including the criteria for eligibility as a chaplain
- the consultation process for expanding enabling places for higher education
- Parliamentary Budget Office projections and growth in spending for higher education
- the provisions in the Higher Education and Research Reform Amendment Bill 2014 relating to the Scholarship Scheme being paid by universities based on their revenue and how the students will contribute to the scheme
- modelling undertaken to support claims regarding a record level of scholarships
- the recovery of HELP debts from people who have travelled overseas or relating to people who have passed away.