

## **Senate Committee: Education and Employment**

### **QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016**

**Outcome: Agency: ACARA**

**Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000021**

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 10 February 2016, Proof Hansard page 27

#### ***ACARA: My School website students with disability data***

##### **Question**

Senator O'NEILL: Before we go to the detail, can I just get this time line clear? The joint working group—did they send a formal request to you in a letter? How were you informed about your project work around the revelation of this disability data?

Mr Randall: Just to help: ACARA is not responsible for the collection of students with disability data.

Senator O'NEILL: That is right.

Mr Randall: So that is actually the responsibility of states and territories—and, at this point, the Commonwealth in relation to collation because it is actually the chair of that joint working group. The work that ACARA was asked to do by council was to prepare for what a future publication of that data would look like. So they are not responsible for the collection; they do not have the data. That data is owned by states and territories. That is just a slight clarification in relation to that data itself, as opposed to preparing for what data presentation may look like on the My School website.

Senator O'NEILL: Thank you for that clarification. That is really helpful. Mr Randall, when did you receive your directions and in what form from the joint working group?

Mr Randall: I will take that on notice to give you an exact answer. We have people on the joint working group. I keep in touch with our officers. One of Dr Rabinowitz's staff members works on it. I am aware of all these things and the discussion, but you are asking me a particular form. I will take on notice about how I got it. I do not recall to be able to answer as clearly as, I think, you want me to do at the moment.

Senator O'NEILL: Is it possible, Mr Randall, that you just received the information as a verbal from a meeting or would you have been directed more formally to undertake the work described by Mr Cook?

Mr Randall: There are minutes of meetings, there is reporting back and that group makes decisions. There would be various ways that I was informed about it. I will go back and check whether there was anything more formal than that.

##### **Answer**

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) has provided the following response.

- The Education Council established a Joint Working Group to Provide Advice on Reform for Students with Disability (JWG). The JWG is chaired by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training, includes representation from all state and territory government education authorities, the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC), and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).
- The JWG has been working to achieve nationally-consistent definitions and collection of data on students with disability (SWD) with the intent that, once a satisfactory level of consistency was achieved, publication at a school level could be considered.

- Up to now the Australian Government Department of Education and Training has been responsible for managing collection of data on students with disability. ACARA has not collected and does not hold these data.
- At the 28 October and 15 December 2015, Joint Working Group meeting it was agreed that ACARA should explore options for presenting SWD data on *My School* and prepare a budget proposal to enable ACARA to undertake the scoping work in the first half of 2016.
- ACARA received no formal direction however, progressing this work is consistent with previous Education Council decisions.
- ACARA submitted a proposal to the JWG on 17 February 2016 with a timeline and resource request for ACARA to investigate how the SWD data could be presented on the *My School* website and to consult with stakeholders and interested parties.
- JWG members at the 17 February 2016 meeting accepted ACARA's proposal.
- No content or format options have been developed for the publication of SWD data on the *My School* website at this very early stage in the process.

In relation to work underway to publication of data on *My School*, please refer to Question No. SQ16-00022.

For consultation in relation to students with disabilities and the Australian Curriculum and *My School*, please refer to SQ16-00025.

In relation to students with disability (*My School* website), please refer to Question No. SQ16-000102.