

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Early Childhood and Child Care

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000163

Senator Hanson-Young, Sarah provided in writing

Closing the Gap report and AEDC

Question

What strategies do you have in place to respond to the recent findings of the Closing the Gap report and AEDC data which shows Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are twice as likely to start school developmentally vulnerable? What is the Government's response to the sector's proposal to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children a minimum of 22.5 hours early learning?

Answer

- Children's outcomes as reported in the AEDC depend on many factors beyond early childhood education and care.

Pre-school and early childhood education is primarily a state government responsibility. The National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education (NPA) makes \$840 million available to states and territories to support all children's participation in a quality preschool program for 600 hours per year throughout 2016 and 2017.

The NPA includes a strong focus on increasing preschool participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, with payments tied to performance indicators that measure: Indigenous preschool enrolments; and of those Indigenous children enrolled, the proportion enrolled in a program for 600 hours per year.

Future funding arrangements for preschool are currently under consideration by Government and will be announced in advance of the 2018 school year.

- The Australian Government has been consulting with stakeholders extensively since the original introduction of the Jobs for Families package in 2015. The proposal above has been raised in these discussions.