

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Care**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0112\_15**

**Senator Lines provided in writing.**

**Question**

**National Partnership Agreement on Technical and Further Education (TAFE) fee waivers**

Page 46 of Budget paper 3 shows funding for the National Partnership Agreement on Technical and Further Education (TAFE) fee waivers for Child Care Qualifications will be cut from the end of 2014. a) Was there any discussion with the States about the continuation of the NP on TAFE Fee waivers prior to budget? Did the states express a desire for the NP to continue? b) Can you confirm when the HECS HELP benefit for early childhood teachers ceases? c) Does the government believe there is no need to continue to support staff to obtain qualifications necessary under the NQF? d) Doesn't the abolition of the TAFE fee waiver program and the HECS HELP benefit program and the National Agreement for Skills and Workforce Development diminish the value of the new professional development fund? e) Has the department discussed with the sector how to address skilled workforce shortages?

**Answer**

- a) No. The National Partnership Agreement has achieved the agreed outcomes and is due to expire, as per the agreement, at the end of 2014.
- b) The HECS-HELP benefit will be discontinued from 1 July 2015. Eligible graduates will have until 30 June 2017 to claim the HECS-HELP benefit for study undertaken in the 2014-15 income year.
- c) No
- d) No
- e) The department regularly meets with sector representatives to discuss issues relevant to the sector including early childhood workforce issues.