

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. ED0114_15

Senator Lines provided in writing.

Question

Students First trial

The Students First trial is listed in PBS on page 41 and Budget paper 2. a) Can the department explain how an online trial involving only 40 preschools can cost \$9.8 million? b) Will this go out to tender? If not, who is running the trial and how were they identified as the appropriate organisation to trial this? c) How will the 40 preschools be selected? d) How many children will be assisted through this trial (ie estimate of how many children in each preschool)? e) How was this program identified as a priority area given the cuts to other child care programs?

Answer

- a) The funding will be used to develop new language learning software suitable for preschool children, as well as develop guidance for teachers, parents and children and to support services in delivery. The department has also allocated funding for the trial infrastructure, staffing and trial evaluation.
- b) A direct source procurement process was undertaken to engage Education Services Australia (ESA) to assist the department to project manage the trial and conduct the tender process for a software vendor. ESA was chosen because of its previous online language software development expertise.
- c) Preschool and long day care services that provide an early childhood education programme will be invited to volunteer to participate in the ELLA trial during 2015.
- d) The number of children who will participate in the trial at up to 40 services will depend on the size of the services involved.
- e) The ELLA trial was an election commitment announced in the Government's *Policy for Schools: Students First* and was announced in the 2014-15 Budget.