

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018**

Outcome: Schools and Youth

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000735

Senator Paterson, James provided in writing

Universal Access funding

Question

Have any States and Territories not received their full payment of the Universal Access funding from the Commonwealth? If not, why not?

Answer

Since 2008, under a series of National Partnership Agreements on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education, the Australian Government has made funding available to states and territories to support increased preschool participation and to ensure consistency in the number of hours available each week. In each case, a proportion of funding has been tied to performance against enrolment targets. Under the 2013–2014 Agreement, 60 per cent of total funding was tied to performance. Under more recent agreements for 2015 and 2016–2017, 70 per cent of total funding has been tied to performance.

- The current National Partnership for 2016 and 2017 makes \$840 million available to states and territories to support preschool programs throughout 2016 and 2017. To date, \$519 million has been paid, with \$22.65 million withheld for failure to meet performance benchmarks. New South Wales, Queensland and the ACT did not receive full performance funding based on 2016 performance.
- All activity under the 2015 National Partnership is complete. Of the \$404.5 million available under this National Partnership, \$318.5 million was paid, with \$86 million withheld for failure to meet performance benchmarks. New South Wales and Queensland did not receive all funding as they did not meet all performance benchmarks.
- All activity under the 2013–2014 National Partnership has been completed. Of the \$655.6 million available under this National Partnership, \$539 million was paid, with \$116.9 million withheld for failure to meet performance benchmarks. New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the Northern Territory did not receive all funding as they did not meet all performance benchmarks.

The proxy measure for Universal Access is that 95 per cent of eligible children are enrolled in a preschool program. This reflects the fact that preschool participation is highly beneficial but not compulsory.