

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2013-2014

Outcome 1 - Early Childhood Education and Child Care

Department of Education Question No. ED0177_14

Senator Lines asked on 20 November 2013, Hansard page 57

Question

Advice on measures to reduce red tape

ACTING CHAIR: Thank you. That is what I was getting at. Going back to a response you gave me, can you tell me why it is not in the public interest to provide information when I asked you if you had been instructed to find alternative savings. You told me that was advice to government and you could not disclose that. Can you tell me why it is not in the public interest to provide that information? Ms Paul: Because here we do not go into the nature of advice that would be advice to government to be considered perhaps in a cabinet context et cetera. That is not something we enter into at Senate estimates. What I can answer is the question about whether we have offered advice, rather than the content of the advice. I forget what your question was and whether I said yes or no. Senator TILLEM: When did you provide the advice? Ms Paul: We will probably have to take that on notice. ACTING CHAIR: And was it provided to cabinet? Ms Paul: I actually cannot remember what you were asking about at the time. ACTING CHAIR: I asked whether the department has been instructed to find any alternative savings to means testing the rebate if the government are going to fund new programs, whilst keeping the promise not to means test. Ms Paul: My answer was no. ACTING CHAIR: But I asked you and you said you had provided advice. Ms Paul: No, that was a different question. Ms Wilson: That was about the quality agenda. ACTING CHAIR: Sorry. Ms Wilson: You asked the question about quality. Ms Paul: That is right. You asked if we have provided advice—you did not actually ask if we had provided advice. You asked something about if we are working with government on the red tape question, and my answer was yes to that. Senator TILLEM: That was me. ACTING CHAIR: When we asked about that further, you said it was advice to government and therefore you could not share it in estimates. Ms Paul: Yes, but I am happy to take on notice the sort of issues that have been raised. There is no problem here. I think I went through some of the issues that providers are saying represents red tape. But I am happy for us to take that on notice and go through it. I think I mentioned the forms that people have to fill in and the levels of government and instrumentalities and so on. Naturally those sort of issues would be exactly the sort that the minister is interested in, and that she hears about directly from providers as well as from us.

Answer

Since the implementation of the National Quality Framework in 2012 services, stakeholders and families have raised a number of issues in relation to regulatory burden for services and flow-on impacts for families. These include:

- the need for educators to be issued a Supervisor Certificate in order to be in a management or supervisory role even for short periods

- lack of advice on the specific requirements for policies and records leading to some services undertaking significant and possibly unnecessary paper work
- overlap with other legislation for example the Building Code and requirements under various state based education laws.