

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. ED0192_14

Senator Tillem asked on 20 November 2013, Hansard page 70

Question

Contracts under the Early Years Quality Fund

Senator TILLEM: Before awarding any major contracts, did the department write to or consult with the assistant minister in relation to those contracts? Ms Paul: The minister is helping me out with advice, so I thank her. Probably the easiest thing we can do is to spell out the process. I do not know if the officers want to do that. Perhaps the easiest way to clarify is just to go through the chronology and talk about, in particular since the election, what activity there has been. Since the election, there have not been any contracts entered into. That is the government's policy, and we have adhered to the government's policy entirely. So the department has not awarded any contracts. Beyond that, the department has offered advice. At the moment the first activity is the review by PwC. That was basically the series of events. Senator TILLEM: Let me go back one step. There have been no major contracts awarded under this program—is that what you just said? Ms Paul: You were talking about the advice to the assistant minister; so, since the election of this government, because of the election commitment, we have not entered into any agreements. Senator TILLEM: Has the department provided the minister with advice in relation to those contracts? Ms Paul: Yes. Senator TILLEM: Did the minister respond to that advice? Ms Paul: Yes. Pg. 71 Senator TILLEM: Can we have a copy? Ms Paul: No. Senator TILLEM: When was this advice provided to the minister? Ms Paul: We can get the dates for you of when we provided it. Senator TILLEM: And when did the minister respond? Ms Paul: Yes, we can get those dates, too. Senator LINES: As to the advice—just so we are clear, because I think you are taking this on notice—was the assistant minister given an opportunity to voice objections to any contracts being offered?

Answer

Advice on the Early Years Quality Fund (EYQF) was provided to the Assistant Minister for Education, the Hon Sussan Ley MP on 1 October 2013. The Assistant Minister signed the brief on 4 October 2013. No contracts have been offered since the election.