

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2011-12
15 February 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: National Partnership

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Cash

QUESTION No.: AI-216

I refer to QoN EW0555_12 from October: did the National Partnership commence in January 2012 as planned? How many training places are currently being supported, of the 'up to 1200' capacity outlined at the last estimates hearing? What can DEEWR report on take-up of the training places so far?

ANSWER

1. The Prime Minister wrote to State Premiers in December 2011, with details of the proposed National Partnership. The proposal was developed following extensive discussions with states and territories. The Prime Minister has signed the agreement and all of the states and territories except South Australia have also signed. South Australia has indicated that it will sign shortly. Implementation Plans have been agreed for New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria and drafts have been submitted for approval by remaining jurisdictions.
2. The agreement was initially intended to be in place by 1 January 2012. This timeframe was not met, although States indicated that eligible parents referred by Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Services providers from January 2012 would be able to access VET training prior to implementation formally occurring.
3. Under the terms of the agreement states will provide guaranteed training to eligible parents. Systems will be put in place to identify anyone who misses out on this guarantee. The requirement agreed with states and territories in December 2011 is that the following groups will be guaranteed access to training:
 - grandfathered recipients of Parenting Payment (Single) that are impacted by the change in income support payments to be introduced on 1 January 2013 (this group totals about 34,000 nationally);
 - teenage parents on Parenting Payment participating in the Teenage Parent Trial in the 10 locations of disadvantage (this group totals about 4,000 nationally); and
 - the performance measure contained in the agreement is that states will meet the guarantee. If the guarantee is not met for 5 per cent or more of parents who are guaranteed and referred to training, states will be penalised.
4. From 1 July 2012 the Commonwealth will report referrals by Job Services Australia / Disability Employment Services and Department of Human Services to the states for the

purpose of assessing whether the guarantee has been met. The agreement will be reviewed by 20 June 2013 to provide the opportunity for Parties to assess whether the agreement is achieving its objectives and for Parties to request change as a result of Review findings. An assessment of take-up will be undertaken in the evaluation of the National Partnership which is due to be completed by October 2014.