

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 1

DEEWR Question No. EW 862_09

Senator HANSON-YOUNG asked on 22 October 2008, DEEWR Hansard page 93 and 94.

Question

Update on progress and timelines for development of the National Quality Framework.

Question: You may need to take this on notice, but would you be able to give me a bit of an update on where the overall framework is going? If you are going into a review and a process of looking into this stuff, do you have a terms of reference, a time frame and things like that which I could take away with me?

Answer

The Government commitment is to improving quality in early childhood education and care through the establishment of a rigorous National Quality Standards Framework. This will include the development and implementation of strong quality standards for early childhood education and child care, and a quality rating system to drive continuous improvement and provide parents with robust and relevant information about the quality of care and learning.

The Commonwealth is currently working with the state and territory governments through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), to enhance the wider regulatory framework to provide a better focus on quality for all early childhood services.

This includes working with jurisdictions to develop and implement the new quality standards for all early childhood settings and to ensure that the quality of education and care is being maintained and continuously improved.

Extensive consultation processes have occurred, with a series of focus groups and public forums between August and September 2008. The child care and preschool sectors, families and experts were consulted throughout the process. Altogether 387 were received.

A National Symposium on the Early Years Learning Framework for key stakeholders was held in November 2008. The EYLF will form part of the National Quality Framework and consultations will continue within state and territory capital cities. Trialling and validation of the draft Early Years Learning Framework will occur in early 2009.

A second wave of public consultations on the draft quality standards, regulatory approach and rating system will be held in early 2009. Currently on track for agreement by COAG to the New National Quality Framework followed by a phased implementation period from 1 July 2009.

A regulatory impact statement on the quality reforms will be developed following public consultation providing options for the National Quality Framework, drawing in industry and sector views.

Relevant papers on the National Quality Framework can be sourced from www.oececc.gov.au