



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QON No. 19

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked By: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for Women

Reference: Women's Budget Statement

Hearing Date: 23/07/2024

In relation to: Community Services Directorate and Women's Budget Statement

QON lodgement Date: 25/07/2024

Answer Due date: 02/08/2024

- (1) Why is three-year-old childcare in the Womens Budget Statement?
- (2) Can you explain how you could mix up women's initiatives with early childhood education strategies? Isn't it quite stereotypical to assume women are responsible for childcare and early education? Aren't children the beneficiary, rather than women? (You might as well put the ambulance service down in the Womens Budget Statement). Shouldn't these programs be part of early childhood education initiatives instead?

Yvette Berry: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) The Women's Budget Statement identifies budget measures which directly or indirectly impact women and girls and access to childcare impacts on the ability of women to participate in the workforce. The availability of free quality early childhood education for three-year-olds will provides opportunities to carers (predominantly women) to return to workforce. This investment is one way in which the Government is supporting women's workforce participation and economic security.
- (2) The Women's Budget Statement identifies budget measures which directly or indirectly impact women and girls.

Women typically take on caring roles more than men, which impacts their capacity to fully engage in paid work. According to the 2021 ABS Census, 59,001 women in the ACT provide unpaid childcare to their children and/or other children compared to 46,109 men. The 2022 *Living Well in the ACT Region* survey, run by the University of Canberra, also shows women are most likely to report spending more time than desired on childcare and/or other caring duties.

Therefore, investing in access to childcare and early childhood education for three-year-olds clearly impacts directly on women and is appropriately included in the Women's Budget Statement.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Date: 9/08/24

By the Minister for Women, Ms Yvette Berry