

**SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Inquiry into the Social Security Amendment (Income Support for Regional Students)  
Bill 2010**

**DEEWR Question No. SIH – H5**

**Senator Back asked on 17 December 2010, EEWHR Hansard page 49-50.**

**Question**

Senator BACK – The reason I ask the question is that in a previous hearing earlier in the year – I believe it was in Melbourne – we were told by several of the universities that they are actually at or near or, indeed, already exceeding the 20 per cent figure. It was specifically in Melbourne; I do not know which universities in Melbourne but they are already at or beyond the 20 per cent. The question I am asking is: do we not see a higher proportion of low socioeconomic students in regional areas, including inner regional areas, so if we can't free up or expand eligibility for students in inner regional areas we are simply going to exacerbate the unavailability of university education for those low socioeconomic people in the inner regional areas? Therefore, my plea to get rid of the geographic boundaries altogether. Ms Milliken – We will take that question on notice, if you do not mind, and we will consult with our colleagues in the higher education area.

**Answer**

In 2009, 31 per cent of domestic higher education students from non-metropolitan areas were from a low socioeconomic status area.

In comparison, 11 per cent of domestic higher education students from metropolitan areas were from a low socioeconomic status area.

**Notes**

(a) Data excludes students whose permanent home address is overseas or unknown, or whose socioeconomic status or region cannot be determined.

(b) Low socioeconomic status (SES) postcode measure is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for postal areas, where postal areas in the bottom 25 per cent of the population aged 15–64 being classified as Low SES. This is the standard method used in Higher Education Statistics Collections publications.

(c) Metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas are derived from Australian Standard Geographical Classifications (ASGC) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.