

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

#### Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

#### Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000202

Senator Xenophon, Nick provided in writing.

#### *Course fee subsidies*

#### Question

With respect to course fee subsidies provided to students attending higher education courses, it is understood that the subsidy received is dependent on a range of factors:

Please provide details as to how the subsidies are determined with respect to:

- a. Education Institute attended
- b. The State in which the education institute is located
- c. Course Type
- d. Means of the student

To assist the Department in fulfilling the purpose of this question, the point of the question is to understand the policy basis for providing different subsidies to different students/courses/institutions etc.

#### Answer

The Australian Government provides funding subsidies under the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS) to higher education students who are enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place (CSP). Table A higher education providers (listed in section 16-15 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA)) and other registered higher education providers that have been allocated CSPs for courses in national priority areas are eligible to receive CGS funding. All higher education providers that receive CGS funding have a funding agreement with the Australian Government. These are available on the Department of Education and Training website here <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/34675>.

The amount of CGS funding the Government contributes per student is calculated according to the classification of units a student undertakes in their course. Each unit of study is mapped to a funding cluster according to its discipline area. The Government contribution ranges from \$1994 (law, accounting, commerce, economics and administration) to \$21,748 (dentistry, medicine, veterinary science and agriculture) per CSP.

There is no differentiation between states and territories in CGS rates for eligible higher education providers. However, some higher education providers receive a regional loading in addition to funding per CSP (explained in chapter 4 of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines). The Government also provides loadings for medical places and enabling places (chapters 5 and 6 of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines, respectively).

Most students enrolled in a CSP are undertaking a bachelor level course. However the Government also provides funding for a designated (i.e. capped) number of enabling, sub bachelor, postgraduate and medical CSPs. The amount of the Government subsidy for all CSPs is the same, regardless of the level of qualification. It only differentiates by unit of study as described above.

Australian Government subsidies do not vary based on the financial means of the students. Students enrolled in CSPs are required to pay a student contribution (for which they can access a HECS-HELP loan). Student contribution amounts are capped to the limits set out in section 93-10 of HESA (these amounts are indexed each year). Additional funding is allocated to higher education providers under the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Programme (HEPPP) to support access for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This funding is separate to the CGS and is provided through the Other Grants (Part 3 of HESA).