

**Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2014-2015**

**Outcome 3 - Higher Education, Research & International**

**Department of Education Question No. ED0050\_15**

**Senator Carr provided in writing.**

**Question**

**Number of full-time equivalent undergraduate students**

The PBS shows how the Government expects the number of full-time equivalent undergraduate students to grow over the Forward Estimates. (a) It is projected that there will be more than 80,000 additional students by 2017-18? Is that right? (b) On what are those figures based? What assumptions and projections did the Department use to arrive at those figures? (c) Do you factor in a proliferation of providers offering sub-degree – or even undergraduate degree – courses? Can you provide details of your forecasts on this? (d) Do you envisage existing providers moving into, or expanding sub-degree provision? Which providers? To what extent? (e) Do you envisage new providers seeking to enter this market, or existing VET providers seeking to enter it? To what extent? (f) How firm are your forecasts? How difficult is it to guess correctly what students – and providers – will do in this regard?

**Answer**

- a) The Department of Education has forecast the number of domestic undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (equivalent full-time student load) (EFTSL) to rise by 88,000 places from 696,000 in 2013-14 to 784,000 in 2017-18 (PBS Programme 3.1 key performance indicators, p.69).
- b) These forecasts are based on estimates of postgraduate and undergraduate Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs) (EFTSL) provided to the Department by higher education providers plus estimates of any overall additional CSPs associated with budget measures. Year on year changes in these estimates are then applied to historical domestic undergraduate and postgraduate enrolments (EFTSL).
- c) The number of providers is not a factor that is taken into account in producing these estimates.
- d) Existing providers will be able to expand their provision of diploma, advanced diploma and associate diploma courses.
- e) The number of providers is not a factor that is taken into account in producing these estimates.
- f) The estimates of student numbers are the best estimates available. Estimated numbers at provider level are not a factor that is taken into account in producing these estimates.