

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000769

Senator Carr, Kim asked on 06 May 2016, Proof Hansard page 115

HELP Thresholds

Question

Senator KIM CARR: ... I do have some questions that I would like to pursue which are more of a technical nature with regard to the loans program and the thresholds. The library tells me that the number of additional graduates who would be caught by lowering the threshold to \$42,000, which was in the paper, would be 200,000. Are you able to advise me as to whether or not that is a reasonable estimate?

Ms Borthwick: I am not sure what that would be based on. Is it—

Senator KIM CARR: The Parliamentary Library has provided this on ATO statistics.

Ms Borthwick: That would be the income 'gap', if you like, between \$42,000 and the current \$54,000. I think that is what that figure is saying, that there may be 200,000—

Senator KIM CARR: Yes. I could give you the millions and all the rest of it, but I am short-handing it here.

Ms Borthwick: It would depend, obviously, on how many of them are enrolled at university.

Senator KIM CARR: Yes. Would you agree that 200,000 is a reasonable estimate?

Ms Borthwick: I do not know. I would have to take that on notice.

Answer

Based on the latest available data from the Australian Taxation Office (in respect of the 2014–15 income year), the department estimates that there are approximately 210,000 HELP debtors in the income bracket between \$42,000 and the minimum repayment threshold of \$54,869 in 2016–17.