

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000994

Senator Cameron, Doug provided in writing

Careers Australia - sales techniques

Question

- The ABC recently reported leaked phone calls from Careers Australia recruitment agents revealing questionable recruitment practices reported to have taken place in November 2016. This included signing up a woman who told the phone canvasser ""... but I can't spell properly or read properly":
 - Has the Department undertaken any action in relation to these calls?
 - Is an investigation underway?
 - Did it start in light of the media reports or in response to another referral?
 - Did Careers Australia record all sales calls? Will the Department be undertaking an audit for other instances of this behaviour?
 - Would these phone calls be permitted under the current VET Student Loans arrangements?
- See: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-26/careers-australia-secret-calls-reveal-salestactics/8562648>

Answer

Following identification of unscrupulous practices by some VET FEE-HELP providers, the department significantly increased its VET FEE-HELP compliance monitoring and actions in mid-2015. There are a number of investigations being undertaken by the Department of Education and Training but it would be inappropriate for the department to comment further on ongoing compliance action.

Under VET Student Loans, approved providers are prohibited from using brokers or agents to advise, enrol, or assist to enrol prospective students for VET Student Loans. Additionally, providers must meet more stringent marketing requirements, which prevent activities such as cold-calling, offering inducements, using third party contact lists, or misrepresenting VET Student Loans.