

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio  
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13  
13 February 2013

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**AGENCY/DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

**TOPIC:** Growth in university student numbers

**REFERENCE:** Written Question – Senator Rhiannon

**QUESTION No.:** AI-105

1. In January it was reported in the media that demand for university places has plateaued after 3 years of strong growth: is there stagnation in demand?
2. What are the details of the growth in student numbers for indigenous students, lower SES students, isolated or rural students, women, school leavers, and in the general student cohorts?
3. What was the actual increase in applications for those students last year, and what does this represent in actual numbers.
  - a) What are the early indications this year?
  - b) What are the figures for each state or university, and for course areas?
4. What is the corresponding data on university offers, and student enrolments?
  - c) What is, if any, the correlation between the wealth or background of the student and the offers made; and by which universities, and the offers accepted?
5. How do the enrolment figures compare to the government's participation targets of 20% increase in lower SES students by 2020 and 40% degree holders among younger people by 2025?
  - d) What were the hopeful yearly increases to achieve this?
  - e) How are these increases on or not on track?
6. What are the trends as far as increases in particular student cohorts at each university?
7. Has there been any consideration or analysis on barriers to students that the government needs address to achieve the enrolment targets?

**ANSWER**

1. Since 2010, applications for Commonwealth supported undergraduate places processed through tertiary admissions centres (TACs) increased by 2.3 per cent to 273,167 in 2012.

As at 18 January 2013 (final year comparisons will be available in November 2013), TACs had received 268,169 applications. This represents an increase of 0.3 per cent compared with the same time last year.

2. There were 226,837 commencing domestic undergraduate students in 2011, which represented an increase of 29.1 per cent from 175,712 in 2005.

Substantial increases were recorded for commencing domestic undergraduate students from each of the following equity groups:

- (a) indigenous students increased by 43.0 per cent from 3,748 in 2005 to 5,359 in 2011;

- (b) low SES students grew from 39,379 in 2005 to 56,710 in 2011, a growth of 44.0 per cent;  
(c) regional and remote students increased by 31.6 per cent to 67,619 in 2011.

The number of commencing domestic undergraduate females increased from 102,666 in 2005 to 131,504 in 2011, an increase of 28.1 per cent.

Between 2005 and 2011, the number of commencing domestic undergraduate school leavers increased by 39.4 per cent to 108,726 in 2011.

**Table 1: Growth in student commencements for indigenous, low SES, regional&remote, women and school leavers, 2005-2011**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	% change 2005-2011
<b>Indigenous</b> <sup>(a)(b)</sup>	3,748	3,836	4,017	4,302	4,797	5,040	5,359	43.0%
<b>Low SES (postcode measure)</b> <sup>(a)(b)(c)</sup>	39,379	41,225	43,383	44,760	49,341	54,902	56,710	44.0%
<b>Regional and remote</b> <sup>(a)(b)</sup>	51,390	52,880	55,008	56,065	60,966	67,130	67,619	31.6%
<b>Women</b> <sup>(b)</sup>	102,666	105,424	109,720	111,213	120,611	128,393	131,504	28.1%
<b>School leavers</b> <sup>(b)</sup>	77,972	83,730	91,213	91,325	97,703	104,615	108,726	39.4%
<b>Total</b> <sup>(b)</sup>	175,712	180,313	186,691	189,516	204,879	220,104	226,837	29.1%

(a) Data excludes students where permanent home address is overseas.

(b) Data includes domestic undergraduate students only.

(c) Low SES postcode measure is based on the students' postcode of permanent home residence, with the SES value derived from the 2006 SEIFA Education and Occupation Index for postal areas, where postal areas in the bottom 25% of the population aged 15-64 being classified as Low SES. This is the normal method that has been used by DEEWR over many years.

3. Nationally, applications increased by 2.2 per cent to 273,167 in 2012. Growth in applications by selected groups is detailed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. TAC Applications by selected groups, final data 2011-2012**

Selected group	2011	2012	Change	% Change
Indigenous	2,934	3,341	407	13.9%
Low SES	49,535	50,870	1,335	2.7%
Non-Metropolitan	58,718	59,733	1,015	1.7%
Females <sup>(1)</sup>	155,780	158,980	3,200	2.1%
School Leavers <sup>(2)</sup>	142,302	147,604	5,302	3.7%

(1) In 2012, applications by females represented more than 58 per cent of total applications.

(2) A school leaver is an applicant who attempted ACACA Year 12 program or the International Baccalaureate in the preceding year.

- a) TAC data as at 18 January 2013, indicates that applications from Indigenous, low SES and school leaver applicants are increasing (see Table 3).

**Table 3. TAC Applications by selected groups, main round data\* 2012-2013**

Selected group	2012	2013	Change	% Change
Indigenous	3,174	3,322	148	4.7%
Low SES	49,467	49,973	506	1.0%
Non-Metropolitan	57,874	57,139	-736	-1.3%
Females	155,683	154,916	-767	-0.5%
School Leavers	147,519	151,032	3,513	2.4%

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

- b) Table 4 provides a breakdown of TAC applications by state/territory for the 2012 and 2013 years using main round applications data.

**Table 4. TAC applications by state and territory, main round data\* 2012-2013**

<b>State</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% change</b>
NSW/ACT	85,536	87,380	2.2%
Vic.	72,226	72,009	-0.3%
Qld	55,887	54,599	-2.3%
WA	19,099	18,744	-1.9%
SA/NT	25,472	25,630	0.6%
Tas.	9,171	9,807	6.9%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>267,391</b>	<b>268,169</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of TAC applications by field of education for the 2012 and 2013 years using main round applications data.

**Table 5. TAC applications by broad and selected narrow fields of education, main round data\* 2012-2013**

<b>Field of education</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% change</b>
Natural and Physical Sciences	22,752	23,578	3.6%
Information Technology	6,729	6,953	3.3%
Engineering	17,924	18,133	1.2%
Architecture	9,092	8,177	-10.1%
Agriculture	4,091	4,357	6.5%
Health	67,963	70,095	3.1%
<i>Medical</i>	11,914	12,550	5.3%
<i>Nursing</i>	21,731	21,270	-2.1%
<i>Dental</i>	4,027	3,922	-2.6%
<i>Veterinary</i>	2,340	2,270	-3.0%
<i>Health Other</i>	27,951	30,083	7.6%
Education	22,898	22,525	-1.6%
Teacher Education	22,025	21,611	-1.9%
Management and Commerce	34,391	33,630	-2.2%
Society and Culture	53,539	53,831	0.5%
<i>Law</i>	10,626	10,726	0.9%
Creative Arts	26,035	25,120	-3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>267,391</b>	<b>268,169</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

4. Nationally, offers increased by 5.2 per cent to 222,476 in 2012. Growth in offers by selected groups is detailed in Table 6 below.

**Table 6. TAC Offers by selected groups, final data 2011-2012**

<b>Selected group</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Indigenous	2,209	2,520	311	14.1%
Low SES	38,393	40,384	1,991	5.2%
Non-Metropolitan	48,528	50,229	1,701	3.5%
Females <sup>(a)</sup>	124,357	130,297	5,940	4.8%
School Leavers <sup>(b)</sup>	115,738	122,499	6,761	5.8%

(a) In 2012, offers to females represented more than 58 per cent of total offers.

(b) A school leaver is an applicant who attempted ACACA Year 12 program or the International Baccalaureate in the preceding year.

Table 7 details growth in offers for selected groups between 2012 and 2013 using main round offers data.

**Table 7. TAC Offers by selected groups, main round data\* 2012-2013**

<b>Selected group</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Indigenous	2,147	2,318	171	8.0%
Low SES	36,830	37,725	895	2.4%
Non-Metropolitan	46,040	45,725	-315	-0.7%
Females	120,321	120,947	626	0.5%
School Leavers	119,187	123,129	3,942	3.3%

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

Table 8 provides a breakdown of TAC offers by state/territory for the 2012 and 2013 years using main round offers data.

**Table 8. TAC Offers by state and territory, main round data\* 2012-2013**

<b>State</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>% change</b>
NSW/ACT	68,928	70,118	1.7%
Vic.	53,969	54,513	1.0%
Qld	41,590	42,685	2.6%
WA	15,780	15,399	-2.4%
SA/NT	18,349	18,583	1.3%
Tas.	6,220	5,796	-6.8%
<b>Australia</b>	<b>204,836</b>	<b>207,094</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

Final year student enrolment data is not yet available for the 2012 year. The Department is yet to receive any student enrolment data for the 2013 year.

Table 9 provides a breakdown of TAC offers by field of education for the 2012 and 2013 years (using main round applications data).

**Table 9. TAC Offers by broad and selected narrow fields of education, main round data\* 2012-2013**

Field of education	2012	2013	% change
Natural and Physical Sciences	21,951	22,860	4.1%
Information Technology	5,624	5,491	-2.4%
Engineering	14,554	14,779	1.5%
Architecture	6,181	5,718	-7.5%
Agriculture	3,883	4,288	10.4%
Health	41,341	42,040	1.7%
<i>Medical</i>	2,234	2,204	-1.3%
<i>Nursing</i>	15,820	15,708	-0.7%
<i>Dental</i>	1,048	910	-13.2%
<i>Veterinary</i>	570	665	16.7%
<i>Health Other</i>	21,669	22,553	4.1%
Education	17,454	17,420	-0.2%
Teacher Education	16,696	16,541	-0.9%
Management and Commerce	28,994	28,963	-0.1%
Society and Culture	45,176	46,059	2.0%
<i>Law</i>	6,423	6,747	5.0%
Creative Arts	17,742	17,679	-0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>204,836</b>	<b>207,094</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

\* Main round data is reported to the Department in January each year.

c) See Attachment A

5. d) and e).

The Department estimated that low SES participation would be 16.5 per cent by 2011 (see Table 10). The latest data (released in August 2012) shows that in 2011, the proportion of undergraduates from low SES postcodes enrolled at all higher education institutions was 16.8 per cent.

**Table 10. Progress towards achieving the 20% low SES target (undergraduates)**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2015	2020
PBS milestones <sup>(a)</sup>	16.0%			16.5%	18.5%	20.0%
Actual-postcode measure <sup>(b)</sup>	16.1%	16.2%	16.5%	16.8%		

Source: DEEWR Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12, page 83 and DIISRTE Portfolio Budget Statements 2012-13, page 97.

(a) Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) milestones are expressed in financial years but are referred to in the above table by the later calendar year i.e. 2007-08 is equivalent to 2008. The milestones for 2011 and 2015 are not published in the DIISRTE 2012-13 PBS. These milestones were published in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2011-12 PBS.

(b) All higher education providers.

In 2012, 36.8 per cent of 25 to 34 year olds had attained a qualification at bachelor level or above compared with 35.0 per cent in 2011 and 34.0 per cent in 2010 (see Table 11). The Department estimated that the 25 to 34 year olds attainment level would be 35.0 per cent in 2011 and 35.5 per cent in 2012.

**Table 11. Progress towards achieving the 40 per cent bachelor level attainment target**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2015	2020	2025
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PBS milestones <sup>(a)</sup>	32.0%			35.0%	35.5%	37.0%	39.5%	40.0%
Actual	31.9%	34.6%	34.0%	35.0%	36.8%			

Source: ABS, Education and Work, (Cat.No.6227.0) and DEEWR 2011-12 PBS, page 83 and DIISRTE PBS 2012-13, page 96

(a) PBS milestones are expressed in financial years but are referred to in the above table by the later calendar year i.e. 2007-08 is equivalent to 2008. The milestones for 2015, 2020 and 2025 are not published in the DIISRTE 2012-13 PBS. These milestones were published in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2011-12 PBS.

6. See Attachment A.
7. The Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education considered the barriers to student participation in higher education. A key barrier to reaching the 20 per cent ambition is raising the aspirations of disadvantaged school students. Once students from disadvantaged backgrounds have entered university the likelihood of them completing their course is broadly similar to that of the general higher education population. However, disadvantaged students often require higher levels of support. In response to these issues, the government is investing \$736 million from 2012 to 2015, through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) to help universities raise the aspirations and capacity of students from low SES backgrounds to participate in higher education.