

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

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

TOPIC: ISSA – COAG Agenda

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, page 70)

QUESTION No.: AI-33

Senator MASON: Many people have highlighted the need for broader international engagement activity in international education—it is a common refrain—including the establishment of better research linkages, focusing on the student experience in Australia, actively promoting the mobility of Australian students to overseas institutions and the establishment of joint programs. These are common discussions in the sector. What is the government doing about those broad issues? The Council of Australian Governments International Students Strategy for Australia—ISSA—I understand was not even on the COAG agenda in 2012. Is that right?

Ms Weddell: Just going to the last question about the ISSA, the International Students Strategy for Australia from COAG: I do not know that it was not on the COAG agenda.

Senator MASON: Really? I might be wrong; I had been told it was not, but all right.

Ms Weddell: The ISSA is a long-term plan, as you would know, around students. There is a report annually through to the COAG secretariat about the activities under the ISSA. So a report has been provided through the arrangements on progress against the ISSA to COAG more broadly.

Senator MASON: Okay, but that does not answer my question about whether it was actually on the COAG agenda. But you think it was, do you, Ms Weddell?

Ms Weddell: I will have to take that on notice.

Senator MASON: I do not want to be too firm about that because I am not certain. With respect to the ISSA: how are we going on progress? Have you any comment on that? Have any funding commitments being made to it?

Ms Weddell: The ISSA is a broad framework of action across a number of different areas. Various progress has been made against each of those areas. One of them would certainly be for students and the issue around student safety. There has been work done where student safety guides have been brought together by states, territories and the Commonwealth and placed on the pertinent websites about studying in Australia. That is one of the areas under the ISSA which is around better information for students.

As a framework across large areas, I do not know that it was a funding commitment framework; it was areas that various states and territories, and the Commonwealth, could work together on.

Senator MASON: Need to address. Okay. I have just seen information on the COAG website: apparently there is no mention of ISSA on the agenda for 2012 at all. Again, I could be wrong, but where I fail I have very good staff, you see, and they say that. If that is correct, that does not strike me as being terribly good. Surely, it should have been addressed in 2012? Anyway—my staff could be wrong, but I am not certain they are.

Senator MASON: I will check about the COAG website. We will do that. But if you could take it on notice that would be helpful.

Ms Weddell: Certainly.

ANSWER

The ISSA was not on COAG's agenda in 2012.