

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: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Building Aspirations and Learning Links for Young People

REFERENCE: Written Question –Senator Nash

QUESTION No.: AI-55

1. Please clarify the nature of the *Building Aspirations and Learning Links for Young people to go to university project*. Is it a Government initiative, initiative of the Murdoch University, joint project between Government and university..?
2. Was the \$5 million grant from the Government specifically allocated in the 2012-13 budget?
3. Is the \$5 million payment a one-off payment for the 4-year project? Or will there be additional grants over the life of the project?
4. Are there plans to implement/encourage similar projects through other universities and in other regions?
5. In a joint media release by the Minister for Education, the then Minister for Tertiary Education and the Special Minister for State regarding the project it was stated that there is an increase in the number of low socio-economic undergraduates, up from 16.5 per cent in 2010 to 16.8 per cent. Is an increase of 0.3 of a per cent over 2 years considered a 'success'?
6. What proportion of the 0.3 per cent increase are rural and regional students?
7. The same media release states '*Our unprecedented investment and our landmark reforms have opened up the doors of our universities to an extra 190,000 Australians*'. Can you clarify where the figure 190,000 came from?
 - i. Over what timeframe did this increase occur?
 - ii. What number or percentage of this increase are students from remote and regional Australia?
8. The project refers to innovative curriculum and teaching, aspiration building, alternative curriculum and leadership and teacher development, but what does this project specifically do to address the issue of cost as a barrier to university studies?

ANSWER

1. The project is a Murdoch University initiative funded by the Government.
2. Funding is specifically identified in the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio Supplementary Additional Estimates 2011-12.
3. The \$5 million is a one-off payment.
4. Through the Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP), universities are funded to undertake activities and implement strategies to improve access to undergraduate courses for people from low SES backgrounds.

5. The 0.3 per cent increase was over a period of one year not two (from 2010 to 2011).

This represents an additional 5,765 students.

2007-08 Budget outcome data provided a benchmark for a proportion of low SES students at 16.5 per cent in the 2010-11 Budget year. The 2011 figure is at 16.8 per cent, so yes, the proportion (of low SES students) would be considered a 'success'.

6. Between 2010 and 2011, the number of undergraduate students that were both Low SES and Regional-Remote increased by 1,940. This increase was slightly lower than the increase in Low SES and not Regional-Remote students (up by 3,825 students). The overall percentage of Low SES and Regional-Remote students remained steady at 6.9 percent of the undergraduate student population between 2010 and 2011.

7.

- i. The estimates show that in 2013, the Government will fund 575,000 Commonwealth places (including 538,000 undergraduate) - around 146,000 more than in 2007.

There is not a one for one relationship between the number of places and the number of students. This is because the number of places is derived using Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL). Not all students undertake full time study – this means, for example, that two students each undertaking a 0.5 study load is equal to one EFTSL.

In 2013, based on further growth in the estimates (the Government is now funding 146,000 more places than in 2007), the Department has calculated that there will be opportunities for 190,000 more students (using a ratio of 1.3 students to 1 EFTSL).

The calculation is $146,000 \times 1.3 = 189,800$, rounded to 190,000.

- ii. As the calculation is based on growth, it is not possible to determine which students will be from remote and regional Australia.

8. The objectives for the Project do not include reducing the costs of university study.