

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
28 and 29 May 2012

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

TOPIC: Low SES Students

REFERENCE: Question on Notice Hansard, Monday 28 May 2012, page 71)

QUESTION No.: BI-31

Senator Chris Evans: There is another thing that I would like to make a point on. I am sure Senator Nash is interested in this. When we talk about low socioeconomic, a lot of these are people from rural and regional Australia where incomes are, on average, lower. I think some people may think of it as the downtrodden super poor, and that is not the measure at all. I am not trying to be disparaging about anyone, but a lot of this just reflects people's postcodes and the low socioeconomic participation. A big part of this has been lifting participation in rural and regional Australia and from other postcodes of outer suburbs of the cities. What is the official measure of low socioeconomic that we use?

Mr Griew: That is the postcode measure for the target. The 20 per cent target is based on the postcode.

Senator MASON: Clearly you would have statistics for that and you would also have statistics relating to Indigeneity that would not be related to that cohort, would it?

Mr de Carvalho: No. It is a separate measure.

Senator MASON: Do you have that as well?

Dr Taylor: Yes, we do.

Senator MASON: Can we have that as well for the last decade?

Dr Taylor: I will have to check if we have those figures, but I think we do. With the review of Indigenous participation and outcomes in universities, which I have been involved with, we found some interesting patterns which went to exactly that question, which was that we found three groups of universities. There were those with very high enrolments with very high attrition rates, those with very low enrolments who had very high success rates for a lower group, and then the pleasing thing was that we found some that had both high enrolment and high success rates. It obviously leads us to the question of what they are doing right.

ANSWER

The department collects data on a range of characteristics of students enrolled in higher education in Australia, including award course completion numbers.

The latest data available on indigenous participation is 2010. Table 1 provides a summary of indigenous students enrolled in higher education in Australia for the period 2001 to 2010:

- The participation rate of indigenous students in higher education (all course levels) was 1.3 per cent in 2010 (11,024 students), which is the same rate as 2009 (10,400 students). The participation rate has steadily increased since 2005 (1.18 per cent).

- For undergraduate indigenous students, the participation rate increased from 1.28 per cent in 2009 (7,551 students) to 1.33 per cent in 2010 (8,243 students).

Table 1: Indigenous domestic students, numbers and participation rates^(a), 2001- 2010

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Undergraduate	6,366	6,494	6,641	6,628	6,331	6,604	6,975	7,038	7,551	8,243
Undergraduate as % of total domestic undergraduate students	1.23%	1.23%	1.26%	1.27%	1.21%	1.24%	1.26%	1.25%	1.28%	1.33%
All students	8,656	8,860	8,964	8,865	8,337	8,816	9,329	9,490	10,400	11,024
All students as % of total domestic students	1.28%	1.26%	1.26%	1.25%	1.18%	1.22%	1.25%	1.25%	1.30%	1.30%

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

Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics 2001-2010, DIISRTE

Table 2 provides a summary of indigenous students who completed an award in Australia for the period 2001 to 2010:

- The number of completions for indigenous students in higher education was 1,437 in 2010, an increase from 1,407 in 2009 (2.1 per cent).
- For undergraduate indigenous students, completions increased from 805 in 2001 to 1023 in 2010.

Table 2: Indigenous domestic student completions^(a), 2001- 2010

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Indigenous undergraduate completions	805	902	922	928	936	1,063	1,138	998	1,011	1,023
Indigenous undergraduate completions as % of total domestic undergraduate completions	0.78%	0.85%	0.84%	0.84%	0.84%	0.96%	1.02%	0.89%	0.88%	0.87%
All Indigenous completions	1,045	1,128	1,191	1,196	1,205	1,360	1,495	1,397	1,407	1,437
All indigenous completions as % of total domestic completions	0.72%	0.74%	0.76%	0.74%	0.74%	0.83%	0.90%	0.83%	0.80%	0.80%

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

Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics 2001-2010, DIISRTE