

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

TOPIC: Government's Access and Equity Strategy

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Di Natale

QUESTION No.: BI-127

1. How does the Department ensure that the Government's Access and Equity Strategy is implemented in its entirety and in relation to all Departmental activities?
 - a) How does the Department acknowledge the multicultural character of the Australian society, in terms of the services and programs you provide?
2. How do you measure your success against Access and Equity goals? What evidence do you that the Department is actively implementing the Government's Access & Equity policy?
3. What changes will you implement over the next financial year to ensure your programs and services are more accessible to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities?
4. What is your Department doing to ensure it has a culturally competent workforce?

ANSWER

1. By ensuring that the delivery of its programs is responsive to Australians from culturally diverse backgrounds through a range of strategies including:
 - Guides and fact sheets produced in multiple languages.
 - Links to Translator Interpreter Services and the National Relay Service.
 - 'LiveChat' for callers who may prefer to interact online.
 - Campaign advertising in the multicultural press.
 - Customer Service Charters and complaint resolution processes.
 - Upgrading the department's websites to *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0* (AA conformance) as required by Australian Government Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy.
 - Accessible content training for authors and publishers of departmental web content.
 - Provision of programs, addressing language and literacy including: Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program; Workplace English Language and Literacy Program; and programs supporting educational opportunities for Indigenous Australians such as the Endeavour Research Fellowship for Indigenous Australians.
 - Cultural Diversity training for staff; and for all new employees, online completion of the APS Values, Code of Conduct and cultural competence training modules.
 - Implementation of the Department's Workplace Diversity Program Strategy and Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Policy.
2. Success is measured through stakeholder satisfactions surveys, program reviews, stakeholder and program partner consultations and focus groups.

3. Refer to response to question 2.
4. Cultural competence is evidenced in a broad range of areas including human resource policies, donation policies, principles of behaviour and conduct, corporate values and through strategies such as:
 - Promotion of ethical standards through the Chief Executive Instructions.
 - Promoting workplace diversity and providing relevant training and counselling to staff.
 - Provision of a dedicated prayer room for staff.
 - Development and ratification of the department's new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
 - Access to *Share Our Pride*, which incorporates an online cultural awareness tool developed by Reconciliation Australia.
 - Increasing Indigenous employment through a Recruitment and Retention Strategy with an intranet presence that provides updated and relevant information about the Strategy.
 - Indigenous Cadetship Program.
 - Participation in the *Learn Earn Legend Work Experience in Government* program.
 - Participation of staff on the Jawun Corporate Partnerships – APS Secondment Program.
 - Participation in the Indigenous Australian Government Development Program (IAGDP).
 - Creating opportunities for staff to learn about each other's cultural identities and viewpoints (NAIDOC Week, Harmony Day, Social Club events and Workplace Giving).
 - International Student Exchange Program, Study Overseas Short-term Mobility Program and Vocational Education and Training Outbound Mobility Program are available to eligible students to allow greater access by students with potential barriers such as disadvantaged backgrounds or accessibility issues.