

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearing 2012-13
17 October 2012

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: AUSTRALIAN SKILLS QUALITY AUTHORITY

TOPIC: Correspondence to providers

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 17 October 2012, page 99)

QUESTION No.: SI-46

Senator CAMERON: We had Dr Carol Nicoll from TEQSA here in the previous session. She indicated that she has written to universities which are linked to the TAFE system to find if there are any issues arising from these cuts for the quality of TAFE education in the university sector. Have you done a similar thing for the TAFE system or are you planning to do a similar thing?

Mr Robinson: I have written to the head of the department in Victoria about the Victorian issues and expressing our concern that it may well affect the quality of the provision in that state. I have received a fairly general response from that person about the matters, but I made it clear that it is an area of concern to us that we are going to keep under notice.

Senator CAMERON: But can you write directly to each TAFE institution; is that part of your remit?

Mr C Robinson: We can provide directions or write to any registered training provider whom we regulate. So in Victoria's case we regulate a little over half of all the providers. As the minister explained before, Victoria did not refer all its powers here to the Commonwealth, to ASQA, so in referring jurisdictions we regulate the institutions that have overseas students or that operate across state borders. But that means all the TAFEs in Victoria come under our jurisdiction.

Senator CAMERON: Wouldn't it be the right thing to do to do the same as Dr Nicoll did and write to the individual TAFE systems, as she has done with the individual universities? If you are only getting a standard response from the department, surely you should go straight to where the action is?

Mr C Robinson: In our case, I do not think it is about writing to them as such; it is about scrutinising the quality of what they are offering and ensuring they are meeting the required standards that our act makes provision for. We certainly have got public providers in those states under notice in terms of our concern that that may well lead to impacts that do reduce quality. So they need to be meeting the standards to continue being registered.

Senator CAMERON: Could you provide a copy of the correspondence you have sent to the Victorian TAFE system? I am not sure what the department is there.

Mr C Robinson: I can.

ANSWER

A copy of the letter is at Attachment A.