

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.5 – Assistance for post school students including those with special needs.

DEST Question No. E541_05

Senator Crossin asked on 16 February 2005, EWRE Hansard page 114.

Question:

Why was the decision made to actually change the number of ABSTUDY administration centres prior to any review of the impact of the ABSTUDY changes? Why would you not wait and make that decision based on the review of ABSTUDY?

Answer:

ABSTUDY

From 1 October 2004, the processing of ABSTUDY payments was consolidated from 14 to 4 Centrelink sites. The decision was taken as part of an internal review by Centrelink of its service delivery arrangements in order to enhance service outcomes to customers. It was not directly related to the impact review of the 2000 changes to ABSTUDY policy being undertaken by DEST.

These sites are for processing only. All Centrelink Customer Service Centres and Call Centres are still responsible for accepting, registering and vetting claims, responding to enquiries and liaising with the processing centres

Each Centrelink Area (14 in total) still has an ABSTUDY coordinator and these people/teams are responsible for providing outreach to customers in their area. In this context, Centrelink anticipates that outreach can be more focussed rather than having to juggle processing imperatives with community liaison responsibilities.