

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. E696_05

Senator Aden Ridgeway provided in writing.

Question:

I would like to ask specifically about Nyangatjatjara College in NT: We have heard concerns coming from the communities that send their students to this college – the Imanpa, Docker River and Mutitjulu communities – that parents are not aware that they and/or their children have waived their right to personally receive Abstudy payments. We have also heard that the Nyangatjatjara Corporation has control of the Abstudy payments and that the money is not benefiting the students. I know that it has been reported to DEST. Do you know anything about this particular situation?

Answer:

ABSTUDY

As stated in the answers to DEST Question Numbers E681_05 and E686_05, the parents of students who attend a boarding school are entitled to receive ABSTUDY payments in respect of their students while their children are living at home and attend school on a daily basis within the community. For the periods they are away at the boarding facilities, these payments are paid to the school for this period to meet board and tuition costs. This is the standard arrangement where the Australian Government subsidises the costs of children attending a boarding school under ABSTUDY.

There have been a number of, as yet unsubstantiated, allegations concerning a range of matters at the College, including ABSTUDY. Based on advice from Centrelink the allegations concerning ABSTUDY appear to be unsubstantiated.