

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for higher education.

DEST Question No. E769_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Can DEST confirm that, between 1994 and 2003, the number of commencing Indigenous students in higher education rose by less than 6%, whereas the proportion of the population identifying as Indigenous in the 1991 and 2001 Census rose by 54%?

Answer:

Indigenous students in higher education

Data from 1994 to 2003, when examined on the most consistent basis, shows Indigenous commencing students rose by 11.6% over that period. The data used to answer this question are from the National Higher Education Statistics collection, compiled by DEST with cooperation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

In 2002 DEST moved to new definitions for total and commencing students in its collection. The new definition is based on a unique count of students enrolled in a twelve month period whereas the old methodology was a unique count of students at the 31 March census date.

This response uses old definition data because it maintains a consistent time series between 1994 and 2003. It should be noted that data based on the old definition will not be the same as new definition data provided in some other publications such as the annual National Report to Parliament on Indigenous Education and Training.

There were 410,003 people (2.2%) in Australia who identified as being of Indigenous origin in the 2001 Census. This represents an increase of 57,033 people (16.2%) since the 1996 Census, and an increase of 144,632 people (54.5%) since the 1991 Census.