

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.1 – Funding for schools.

DEST Question No. E773_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

What are the reasons for these trends? What is the reason for the sudden drop in award course completions in 1999? Has DEST undertaken any research into this? What has DEST concluded?

Answer:

Indigenous student enrolments

DEST analysed the available Indigenous higher education data as part of the review, *Higher Education at the Crossroads*, launched in March 2002. The analyses were reported in the issues paper, *Achieving Equitable and Appropriate Outcomes: Indigenous Australians in Higher Education*.

Analysis of data for commencing and all Indigenous enrolments shows that key decreases between 1999 and 2001 were at levels below bachelor award. There was also a decrease in Indigenous students at the postgraduate level.

The decrease in numbers of Indigenous award course completions between 1998 and 2001 (116) comprised 82 at diploma level and only two at the degree level. It is likely that the decrease in completions reflects, to some extent, the shift of students studying for other undergraduate awards (that is diplomas) to degrees, with courses at the latter level taking more time to complete. The other main area of decrease (38 completions) was in other postgraduate courses.