

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: All
Output Group: All

DEST Question No. E852_05 & E818_05 (request for updates)

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to DEST Question No. E999_04

Question:

Could you provide an update (where required due to changes) of the list of all administered programmes in the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) – as provided in answer to a question from the February hearing - including:

- a. a description of the programme;
- b. projected over-spends and underspends in each programme for the year 2003-04 (to 30 June), including, where appropriate, details, elements or components of each programme where over- or under-spending will occur and reasons for each;
- c. actual expenditure for each programme to 30 April 2004, with over- and underspends identified and details as specified in b) above;
- d. in the case of programmes where funding is provided to individual recipients (eg schools, schools systems, universities), whether any overfunding has been recovered, or is expected to be recovered by 30 June 2004, total amount of the overpayments and the total amount recovered or expected to be recovered;
- e. the policy objective of the programme;
- f. whether the programme is ongoing and if not, when it is due to expire;
- g. the funding in each financial year of the forward estimates for the programme (with a breakdown of administered and departmental expenses) including:
 - how much funding has been allocated for the programme; and
 - how much is committed to the programme.
- h. Please provide an indication of whether an evaluation of the programme's effectiveness has been conducted and:
 - if so, when the most recent evaluation occurred;
 - if so, the conclusion or recommendations of that evaluation;
 - if not, when an evaluation is scheduled; and
 - if an evaluation has not been scheduled, the reasons for this?

Answer:

Administered Programmes

Questions E852_05 and E810_05 seek a further update to question E999_04 relating to information about DEST's programmes. Given that these questions were originally asked during the Senate Estimates Committee hearing which considered the 2004-05 Additional Estimates in February 2005, information will need to be updated to the latest available, in a format that enhances its readability and is able to be easily updated in future years.

To achieve this goal it is proposed that the information provided differs from what was provided in previous updates in the following ways.

- a) The list of programme will be those agreed between DEST and the Department of Finance and Administration for estimates and reporting purposes. All the information contained in the previous answers will be contained in this answer under the relevant programme. Using the Department of Finance and Administration's programme list will ensure that the financial information is consistent with the Portfolio Budget and Additional Estimate Statements and the final outcome information contained in the Annual Report. Having a consistent programme list will make the information more readily updated in the future. A current list of programmes and the requested information is at Attachment A.
- b) The information requested will be presented in a different order. The descriptive information about a programme will be brought together and will be followed by the financial information. This will ensure that the information can be used as a basis for a document on DEST programme information which will have many other uses.
- c) The 2005-06 Budget and the forward year information will be as at the 2005-06 Budget and the actual outcome will be as at the end of the 2004-05 financial year as included in DEST's Financial Statements, finalised in September 2005.
- d) The commitment by programme will represent commitment beyond 2005-06 as at 30 June 2005 in the case of Annual Appropriations and legislative commitments as at 30 June 2005 for Special Appropriations. Commitments are provided for estimated expenditure by year, not expenses.
- e) Explanations have been provided for the major over and under expenditures recognising that minor variations are common due to the cash limited nature of appropriations and flexibilities available through accrual based budgeting.
- f) DEST does not attribute Departmental expenses to individual programmes so the financial figures provided by programme are for Administrative expenses.
- g) Under the majority of programmes there is requirement to recover funds if deliverables are not met. Generally these recoveries are either minor in nature and happen on an ad hoc basis or, for those programmes where payments are made to educational institutions, any recoveries are usually offset against future payments. These recoveries are not included in the response. DEST does have some programmes where the recovery of funds (e.g. student loans and debts) are an integral part of the programme and the level of recoveries as at 30 June 2005 have been included in the response.