EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2
Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for Higher Education

DEST Question No. E803_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Part-time Australian Postgraduate Awards

1. Can you tell me how many higher degree students are in receipt of part-time Australian Postgraduate Awards?

2. What percentage is this of the total?

3. What criteria must a student fulfil to be eligible to hold an APA on a part-time basis?

4. To qualify, do they need to have a disability or face significant demands as a carer?

5. When was the issue of the taxation of part-time APAs last raised with the Department?

6. Is the Department considering approaching the ATO with a view to resolving this anomaly – because full-time APAs are not subject to income tax?

7. Has the Department held discussions with other relevant departments and/or agencies about the policy link between this issue and that of the Government's "Welfare to Work" initiative?

8. What has been the outcome of any such discussions?

Answer:

Part-time Australian Postgraduate Awards

1. 923 students received a part-time APA in 2005.

2. 17%.

3. The requirements for the Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA) are in Chapter 3 of the Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines 2007 and can be found at http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/programmes_funding/programme_categories/fellowships_awards_prizes/australian_postgraduate_awards_scheme.htm

4. See answer 3.

5. The issue was raised with government in 2002.

6. No. The department has addressed the different taxation status of part-time and full-time APA awards by including an additional amount in the part-time rate to ensure that the award holders receive, after tax, half the full-time rate, and are thus not disadvantaged in terms of funding support. APA stipend rates for 2007 are $19,616 for full-time students and $10,480 for part-time students.

7. No.

8. N/A