

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome:** 2  
**Output Group:** 2.2 – Australian Apprenticeships

#### DEST Question No. E826\_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

Skills for the Future: Business Skills Voucher for Apprentices

QoN E606\_07 refers

The Government's \$837 million skills package announced in October 2006 included provision for Business Skills Voucher for Apprentices.

The total administered and departmental costs are (\$000):

Business Skills Vouchers for Apprentices	1,000	1,500	2,700	3,200	4,000	<b>12,300</b>
Dept	405	233	288	243	350	<b>1,519</b>

1. How are the Business Skills Vouchers, available under Skills for the Future, working?
2. Has the Department determined approved providers for the voucher?
3. What guidelines are in place to determine eligibility?
4. What performance indicators are used to measure its success or failure?
5. What's the implementation/rollout of the voucher program to date? What has been the uptake by students? What has been the uptake by businesses? What advertising has the Government done to date in relation to the voucher program? How much has this cost?
6. What price controls have been put in place?
7. Why aren't the vouchers indexed?

#### Answer:

*Skills for the Future: Business Skills Voucher for Apprentices*

- 1-2 The Business Skills Vouchers for Apprentices commenced on 1 January 2007. As at 30 April 2007, 302 training providers had been approved and 107 Business Skills vouchers had been issued.
3. Any RTO which is accredited to deliver eligible business training units within its current scope of registration can apply to DEST to participate in the Business Skills Vouchers for Apprentices initiative any time throughout the life of the programme.

Detailed Programme Administration Guidelines have been developed. These guidelines are publicly available on the Australian Skills Vouchers Programme website ([www.skillsvouchers.dest.gov.au](http://www.skillsvouchers.dest.gov.au)).

4. Key performance indicators will be included in external reporting including through the annual Portfolio Budget Statements and the Department's Annual Report.
5. 1,000 vouchers have been allocated for the first six months of the programme from 1 January to 30 June 2007. Business does not have a direct role in this initiative as vouchers are provided directly to apprentices with training provided by approved training providers.

The Australian Skills Vouchers Programme has been promoted through the Australian Government's recent *Skills for the Future* advertising campaign. The Australian Skills Vouchers Programme is one of four initiatives promoted as part of this campaign. The total cost of the *Skills for the Future advertising* campaign is estimated at \$20.5 million.

6. To ensure a competitive market, all training providers interested in participating in the Business Skills Vouchers Programme were required to submit costs for each course they wished to offer.

DEST assesses costs submitted for each training provider and course to ensure all costings are reasonable.

7. The vouchers are worth \$500 per voucher for the life of the programme.