

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.1 – Funding for Schools

DEST Question No. E827_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Australian Technical Colleges

1. Why was it necessary to bring forward funding under the ATC Act last year? Provide a breakdown of where additional costs arose and why.
2. Of the \$112.6 million being sought for the remaining period:
 - a. Can the Department advise what costs are associated with this funding?
 - b. Why is it necessary?
 - c. Capital costs? Outline
 - d. Start-up costs?
3. Will the Department provide a breakdown of ATC funding over the forward estimates – anything beyond 09.
4. What has been the enrolment rate at colleges established to date – provide a breakdown by each college
5. What has the commencement rate been in each of the colleges up and running?
6. What has the drop-out rate been in each of the colleges up and running?
7. Of the enrolments:
 - a. How many enrolments are school-based apprentices?
 - b. How many from other sources?
8. Of the enrolments, how many are in new facilities and how many are in existing facilities that been accredited as Australian Technical Colleges? – ie, pre-enrolled or new enrolments?
9. The Minister for Vocational Education last week announced that 20 Australian Technical Colleges would be up and running by this Monday 12 February.

Answer:

Australian Technical Colleges

1. The Amendment Bill brought funding forward from 2008 and 2009 into 2006 and 2007. The Bill also included a regulation-making power to allow funding for a calendar year to be carried over or brought forward to another calendar year to provide more flexibility in managing the programme. The amendment was necessary as a greater number of colleges were opening sooner than anticipated, thus requiring additional funding in the early years.

2. Original costings were based on twenty four Australian Technical Colleges and a number of key assumptions about delivery models and opening dates. Additional funds are required to reflect the following outcomes:
 - i) more colleges than originally anticipated will have opened in 2007 which has resulted in increased costs over the five year period;
 - ii) a number of Colleges have pursued models that achieve broader coverage of the region, particularly in regional areas. These have included flexible delivery arrangements, transport provision, access centres and additional campuses, all of which have increased costs.
 - iii) more Colleges have required new infrastructure than originally anticipated.
3. The current forward estimates for Australian Technical Colleges are published in Appendix 1 of the Department's 2006-07 Portfolio Budget Statements.
4. Refer to E991-07
5. The Australian Technical Colleges report on student numbers at two census dates, 31 March and 31 October. The data collected at the census provides a snapshot of enrolments at that point. As the programme is still in early stages, trend data on commencements and drop-out rates are not yet available.
6. See response to question 5 above.
7. Of the enrolments:
 - a. Refer to E991-07. Under their Funding Agreements, Australian Technical Colleges are required to place their students in Australian School-based Apprenticeships as soon as possible after commencing at the college. As at 31 March 2007, 280 students were in Australian School-based Apprenticeships. Note that students at Port Macquarie were unable to access Certificate 111 Australian School-based Apprenticeships in 2006 due to state barriers.
 - b. This question is not clear.
8. All enrolments at Australian Technical Colleges are new enrolments.
9. That is correct, 20 Australian Technical Colleges are now operational.