

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. E828_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Toolkit Program

1. Have you determined the financial implications of the changes to the Migration Occupations in Demand List on the Tools for Your Trade Initiative?
2. What do you estimate the cost to be?
3. Answer E621_07, about toolkit take-up rates, was only received this morning by the Committee – when the hearing had already commenced. What is the reason for this?
4. In this answer, can you explain the difference between Tables (b) and (c)? Would the 1304 apprentices shown in Table (b) overlap substantially with those in Table (c)? Or do we have over 2000 who have withdrawn after receiving their toolkit?
5. Can you tell us what becomes of these toolkits when apprentices drop out of their training?
6. Take-up rates:
 - a. How do the take-up rates shown in Table (a) shape up compared to your initial estimates?
 - b. What percentage of eligible Australian Apprentices have taken up the toolkit offer?
7. How have you publicised the offer? Are you reviewing that?
8. Are you reviewing the toolkit program? Why? What changes are likely to be made, or have been proposed? When will they be announced?

Answer:

Toolkit Program

1. The Department has finalised the list of qualifications which map to the 16 additional trades and estimated the number of expected commencements in those qualifications.
2. The Department is still negotiating additional funding allocations with the Department of Finance and Administration arising as a result of the additional 16 trades added to the Migration Occupations in Demand List on 28 March 2006.
3. It took some time for the Department to develop a response. This was further delayed as a result of the Department's clearance process which took place during the Christmas/New Year period.

4. Table (b) is the total number of Australian Apprentices who had received a tool kit and subsequently withdrew from training at any time. Table (c) only includes those Australian Apprentices who had received a tool kit and withdrew between the 3 and 9 month point of their training arrangements. Table (c) also includes all end reasons, including where ownership of the business had changed.
5. If the Australian Apprentice leaves before the nine month point the employer retains ownership of the tool kit. The employer may provide the tool kit for use by other Australian Apprentices who have not reached their three month point, for Australian Apprentices who are ineligible for the initiative as a result of commencing prior to the initiative and for use by work experience students.
6. a) It was originally estimated that 34,000 Australian Apprentices would be eligible for a tool kit in 2005-06, 35,029 in 2006-07, 35,978 in 2007-08 and 36,928 in 2008-09.
b) As at 2 March 2007, 94,801 Australian Apprentices with an approved Training Contract had commenced in a trade eligible to receive a tool kit. Of those, 62,396, or 66% have received a tool kit voucher.
7. Australian Apprentices who commence in an eligible trade are informed that they may be eligible to receive a tool kit under the Tools For Your Trade initiative at the time they sign their Training Contract. Following this, every eligible Australian Apprentice is contacted by letter through their employer at the three month point by the Tools For Your Trade provider.

The Department publicises the Tools For Your Trade initiative on the Australian Apprenticeships website and has various A4 flyers, brochures, posters and point of sale material that is disseminated by the Department and the provider to key industry stakeholders and potential eligible recipients. The contracted provider also publicises the Tools For Your Trade initiative on its own website and through a range of print advertisements in major papers and industry magazines. A review of the initiative's marketing and publicity strategy is not planned.

8. The Tools For Your Trade initiative will be reviewed in 2008.