

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.2 Assistance for individuals including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E001_04

Senator Crossin tabled on 4 June 2003.

Question:

- a) How many children of secondary school age are there in NT, WA and Queensland?
- b) How many of these does the Department estimate are eligible for Abstudy?
- c) What is the breakdown by community?
- d) How many applications for Abstudy were received for this year of schooling in total and in a breakdown of numbers by each State and Territory?
- e) If there is a difference in estimates and applicants can the Department explain why this may be the case?

Answer:

Number of Indigenous secondary school students and take up of ABSTUDY

- a) The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Schools publication indicates that the model age for enrolments in Year 8 in all these States is 13 years, 14 years of age for Year 9 and so on until it is 17 years of age for Year 12. Table 1 shows 2001 numbers of Indigenous and non Indigenous persons aged 13 to 17 years in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland. It cannot be ascertained from this data, however, how many of these persons would have commenced secondary school in 2001 or who had already completed secondary schooling or left school on attaining the school leaving age.

Table 1
Persons aged 13-17 years identified by the 2001 ABS Census

13-17 years	Northern Territory	Western Australia	Queensland
Non Indigenous*	8,855	128,163	244,196
Indigenous	5,583	6,687	12,341
Total	14,438	134,850	256,537

*Includes those that did not state if they were Indigenous.

Source 2001 ABS census data.

Table 2 shows the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous secondary school students in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland in 2001.

Table 2
Secondary school students in 2001

	Northern Territory	Western Australia	Queensland
Non-Indigenous students in secondary schools	7,887	121,961	228,552
Indigenous students in secondary schools	3,404	5,301	9,942
Total	11,291	127,262	238,494

Source 2001 ABS National Schools Statistics Collection

- b) From the available data it is not possible to estimate the number of Indigenous students who would be eligible for ABSTUDY. Most ABSTUDY allowances for secondary school students are means-tested or only available for low income families.
- c) The available data is not able to be disaggregated to this level.
- d) Table 3 shows the number of applications for ABSTUDY, by State and Territory, received by Centrelink for secondary students as at 31 May 2003.

Table 3 ABSTUDY applications received by Centrelink for 2003 as at 31 May 2003

NSW	QLD	WA	NT	SA	VIC	TAS	ACT	NATIONAL
8,926	7,849	4,264	2,357	1,440	1,425	1,118	147	27,526

Source: SuperSTAR data provided by Centrelink.

- e) It is not possible to explain the reasons why a secondary school student or student's family did not apply for ABSTUDY as this data is not collected. There could be many reasons for this, such as the family income is too high, or the student applied for assistance under the Youth Allowance, Assistance for Isolated Children scheme or Veterans' Children Education Scheme. It should also be noted that ABSTUDY applications can be lodged until 31 December in the year of study and be assessed retrospectively.