

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2
Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for higher education

DEST Question No. E084_04

Senator Carr tabled on 5 June 2003

Question:

- a) The tracking system that will allow institutions and government to keep track of each person's entitlement: who will administer that?
- b) Just how much will universities have to do? What will be up to them?
- c) Have you estimated how much it will cost them?
- d) Will centralized records be kept by the Commonwealth? What will be the cost to the Commonwealth of this?
- e) Aren't there privacy concerns if students are to be followed in this way? What security measures and procedures will be put in place regarding the collection and storage of students' HEIMS numbers and details? To whom will they be available?
- f) Has the Government consulted with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner on this area?

Answer:

HEIMS

- a) The Department of Education, Science and Training will administer the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS).
- b) As they do now, universities will assess students' eligibility for Commonwealth assistance, such as Commonwealth supported places, student loans and/or scholarships, and allocate that assistance to their students. HEIMS will allow universities to verify that students are entitled to the assistance for which they are applying.
- c) Higher education institutions will receive approximately \$200,000 each in 2003/04 as contribution towards the costs associated with the implementation of HEIMS and the maintenance of the new student assistance initiatives. The Department has not estimated the cost to individual institutions.
- d) Records will be maintained centrally by the Commonwealth in the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS). \$20.1 million has been committed over four years (2004 – 2007) for the development, administration and implementation of HEIMS.

- e) The data collected through HEIMS will be strictly regulated to meet the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* relating to the collection, use, storage, access and disclosure of personal information. The data in HEIMS will be available to relevant institutional staff with the appropriate level of clearance and Commonwealth officers for purposes including programme administration, systems maintenance, compliance, maintenance of records, access and correction of student records, and review/appeals processes.

- f) The Department is currently consulting with the Attorney General's Department and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner has already been informally consulted in relation to some preliminary issues, and will also be subsequently formally consulted to ensure that privacy considerations are adequately addressed.