

## 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. E307\_04

Senator Harradine asked on 5 June 2003

#### Question:

Many students from disadvantaged backgrounds do not consider university study as a realistic option. How can we address that attitude so that students can truly consider university as an option?

#### Answer:

##### *Disadvantaged students' attitudes to university study*

Research undertaken by Richard James, *Socioeconomic Background and Higher Education Participation: An Analysis of School Students' Aspirations and Expectations* (2002), found that the low participation in higher education of students from low socio-economic status was influenced by attitudinal and cultural issues, including parental attitude and occupation. Many universities run outreach programs to disadvantaged schools to encourage students to consider university study. From 2005, all universities will be required to run outreach programs and support services for disadvantaged students in order to receive funding under the Higher Education Equity Program (HEEP).

The Regional Disability Liaison Officers, also funded through HEEP, and the new Disability Coordination Officers work with schools and other education providers to promote participation in higher education, as well as vocational education and training, to students with disabilities and their parents. The Commonwealth provides special assistance to universities through the Additional Support for Students with Disabilities Program to help them with the cost of providing educational support and/or equipment to students with disabilities who may need extra support to participate in higher education.

Career information for school students may also influence decisions about further study. The Department sponsors the Job Guide and the No Shame Job career information books and the myfuture.edu.au career information website. The Job Guide includes information about government financial assistance and study for those young people wanting to undertake further study after school. No Shame Job, for Indigenous students considering a career in health, directs readers to sources of information on study, accommodation and financial assistance to help them undertake university studies. The myfuture website enables users to research options for further study or training. Users are able to investigate courses and places of study, including university courses and institutions, for a wide range of occupations. It also provides information on sources of support and financial assistance for study, including for attendance at universities.