

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

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

DEST Question No. E348_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

You say that fee deregulation (such as through the partially-regulated HECS contributions now applying) provides higher education institutions with *"more flexibility in order to pursue their institutional goals"*. But virtually every institution has now increased their HECS charges by the maximum allowable 25%.

- (a) Isn't that the case?
- (b) How many have not? Which are they?
- (c) Why do you believe that virtually all institutions have taken this step?
- (d) How does the fact that they have almost universally lifted their HECS charges by the maximum allowable mesh with your idea of "flexibility to pursue institutional goals"?

Answer:

Student contribution decisions

- (a) In 2005, 17 of the 43 higher education providers with Commonwealth supported places set their student contributions at the maximum level for all of their units of study. An additional 5 providers set student contributions at the maximum level for some of their units.

The Department will not know final student contributions for 2006 until October 2005, which is when providers submit their schedule of student contributions to the Minister. To the Department's knowledge, at the time of answering this question, an additional 11 providers had announced their intention to set student contributions at the maximum level for some or all of their units in 2006.

- (b) In 2005, 21 of the 43 higher education providers with Commonwealth supported places did not set their student contributions for any of their commencing students at the maximum allowable. These higher education providers were:
 - Australian Catholic University
 - Australian Maritime College
 - The Australian National University
 - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
 - Central Queensland University
 - Charles Darwin University
 - Charles Sturt University
 - Curtin University of Technology
 - James Cook University

- Macquarie University
- Murdoch University
- Southern Cross University
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Canberra
- The University of New England
- The University of New South Wales
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of Tasmania
- University of Western Sydney
- University of Wollongong
- Victoria University of Technology

The Department will not know student contributions for 2006 until October 2005, which is when providers submit their schedule of student contributions to the Minister. To the Department's knowledge, at the time of answering this question, of the 21 providers listed above, 10 providers had not announced an intention to set student contributions at the maximum allowable for some or all of their units of study in 2006. These higher education providers were:

- Australian Maritime College
- The Australian National University
- Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Darwin University
- Macquarie University
- Murdoch University
- The University of New England
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of Tasmania

- (c) Higher education providers are not required to advise the Department of their reasons for setting student contributions amounts at certain levels.
- (d) Decisions have been taken by individual providers at various times, to apply to various sets of their courses.