

## 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. E349\_06

Senator Carr provided in writing.

#### Question:

- (a) Didn't the Minister say in the House on 13 August 2003, "*That is very important, not because some universities will get extra money for teaching and supporting students by increasing HECS charges in some courses but because it goes to the heart of quality and differentiation.*"?
- (b) Where's the flexibility? Where's the variety?
- (c) Where are the various institutional goals reflected in this outcome?
- (d) Isn't it the outcome you expected, given the paucity of indexation funding since 1996?
- (e) Aren't you going to be under increasing pressure to pull this trick again, in a few years, as costs blow out?

#### Answer:

##### *Student contribution decisions*

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Higher education providers have been provided with the flexibility to determine student contributions for their units of study, within a range set by the Government. Providers may use this flexibility to derive income that will enhance their capacity to pursue a variety of institutional goals. Individual providers have made decisions at different times to apply to different sets of their courses.
- (c) The published documents that articulate providers' institutional goals and strategic missions reflect the sector's diversity.
- (d) Student contribution decisions made by higher education providers in 2005 were not uniform, despite all providers being subject to the same indexation arrangements.
- (e) The Minister has stated that he has no plans to further deregulate student contributions.