

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2
Output Group: 2.2 - New Apprenticeships

DEST Question No. E155_07

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

For all initiatives under the COAG Skills Agenda:

- i. What individual programs are to be funded? What is the purpose of each program?
- ii. How is this funding to be allocated? To whom and by whom?
- iii. For each program, what is the funding in the current budget year and across the forward estimates? What are these by Administered Items and Departmental Outputs?
- iv. For each program to which Output Group and budget line are they allocated?

Answer:

COAG initiatives

The COAG initiatives are an integrated approach to address skills shortages. Funding has therefore not been disaggregated by specific initiatives, but rather, allocated as a single appropriation under Output Group 2.2 New Apprenticeships, to implement a number of initiatives.

Actual expenditure will ultimately be determined by the level of response to individual initiatives.

Funding for the COAG initiatives is over a four year period from 2006-07 and the estimates for Administered and Departmental expenditure are shown below:

Apprenticeships, training and skills recognition – a new national approach

	2006-07 \$'000	2007-08 \$'000	2008-09 \$'000	2009-10 \$'000	Total \$'000
Administered	14,700	14,800	11,100	3,500	44,100
Departmental	3,601	3,274	1,952	557	9,384
Total	18,301	18,074	13,052	4,057	53,484

The specific elements to be implemented are:

Mutual recognition of skills and licences across Australia

This program element has been established for the purpose of achieving more efficient recognition of occupational licences between States and Territories. Funding is used to support dialogue between licence regulators and other key stakeholders so that agreement may be reached on the appropriate model for each occupation. Items funded may include travel and meeting costs, and additional research and preparatory work undertaken by occupational or licensing experts. The COAG decision established a national secretariat, led

by an officer from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and located in DEST. The Secretariat is directly responsible for all expenditure under the program.

Recognition of prior learning initiative

This initiative is to help workers gain recognition of their prior learning.

Funding will be provided to the States and Territories by the Australian Government over three years. Funding allocations will be based on a State or Territory's percentage of Australia's working age population. States and Territories will be required to provide matched funding for projects under the RPL Programme.

New programme to target regional skills

The Targeting Skills Needs in Regions (TSNR) programme will be managed by the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Funding proposals from proponents will be prioritised and recommended by each State and Territory for consideration by a national panel. The national panel will then recommend proposals for approval for funding by the Minister for Vocational and Technical Education. The national panel will include small and large state representatives as well as representatives from industry and the Department of Education, Science and Training.

Organisations identified in the TSNR Programme Guidelines as eligible proponents include:

- organisations that are able to demonstrate experience in developing and implementing flexible skills needs solutions;
- businesses and enterprises operating in the regions;
- local government; and
- local industry organisations.

Data sharing to help understand skills needs better

This initiative aims to improve the quality and availability of skills supply and demand information. The initiative funds the Department of Education, Science and Training to research and produce more detailed information about a key component of skills supply – the flow of students in vocational and technical education courses to employment in specific occupations.

Introduction of “skill sets” to benefit Australian workers and industry

This initiative is to enable groups of specialised competencies or “skills sets” to be identified for current jobs, as well as to develop new training pathways, qualifications and support material. This initiative will enable skills sets to be clearly identified for current jobs and ensure that they are recognised across Australia.

COAG recommended that Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) work with industry to identify skills sets in all training packages where there is industry demand. Funding will be allocated to ISCs by the Australian Government to identify skills sets in training packages, on the basis of demonstrated need.