

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome:** 1 and 2  
**Output Group:** 1.2 - Assistance for individuals including those with special needs  
2.5 - Assistance for post-school students including those with special needs

#### **DEST Question No: E366\_07**

Senator Wong asked in writing.

#### **Question:**

The Department's New Apprentices Roundtable, held in November 2005, recommended that DEST:

*Recommendation 8*  
*Review Centrelink's means testing for independence, as it is currently too rigid and inflexible and an extension of rent assistance to New Apprentices for the duration of their training regardless of age or when they moved out of home.*

Has the Department considered and responded to the recommendation of the New Apprentices Roundtable that means testing for independence and rent assistance be reviewed?

#### **Answer:**

##### *New Apprentices Roundtable*

The Department notes recommendation 8 from the New Apprentices Roundtable (to be known from now on as the 'Australian Apprentices Roundtable') concerning the application of means tests for independence and the extension of Rent Assistance to Australian Apprentices for the duration of their training.

An important policy objective for the Australian Government is to support Australian Apprentices for the duration of their training. The criteria for eligibility for assistance, including means testing, for income support payments are established by the *Social Security Act 1991* and apply to all students in post compulsory education and training, including Australian Apprentices. Any amendment to these conditions is a matter for Government, taking into account budgetary implications.