

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2007-2008 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 2 - HIGHER EDUCATION

DEST Question No. E106_08

Senator Carr asked on 31 May 2007, EWRE Hansard page 72.

Question:

Senator CARR—There was a series of entities operating at the time of the Greenwich University scandal on Norfolk Island. Some of them were operating out of telephone boxes in Brisbane. This one was operating out of a grog shop in Adelaide. It was registered in the Turks and Caicos Islands at the time. I recall that Mr Sedgwick was the secretary of the department at the time. That is probably why it does not ring a bell immediately.

Ms Paul—Greenwich does, of course. As usual, we would welcome the detail.

Senator CARR—I would ask if you could check the records. I understand it has now moved. It now claims to have a campus on the Pacific island of Niue, which has a population of 2,000 people, and in Sierra Leone, Mogadishu and Somalia. I raise it because this individual has approached me about what was described at the time as a degree mill. Can the department check its files to advise the committee of the investigations that were carried out at that time and the findings you made about it not being a genuine university by Australian standards? If I remember rightly, it was in breach of the protocols at the time.

Ms Paul—That is correct.

Senator CARR—Can you advise the committee of your findings from that time?

Ms Paul—Yes.

Answer:

St Clements University.

It appears that this question pertains to an entity called St Clements University. St Clements University is a private commercial university company registered in the Turks and Caicos Islands, British West Indies. The university's website states that it offers undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, some in a campus environment, whilst the majority are offered via distance learning.

DEST was notified about St Clements University in 2000. The St Clements University website initially indicated that its administration was located in South Australia. However, St Clements University is not now and has never been accredited to provide higher education awards in Australia

Accordingly, the matter was referred by DEST to the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Training (DFEEST), formerly the SA Accreditation and Recognition Council, for investigation and action as appropriate.

Following referral to DFEEST, all references to its operation in Australia were removed from the St Clements University website. It does not list any campuses or learning centres in Australia.