

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

**Outcome** 1, 2, 3

#### **DEST Question No. E128\_08**

Senator Stott Despoja provided in writing.

#### **Question:**

1. What is the number (and proportion if you have it) of tertiary students receiving Austudy? How do those numbers compare over a 5 year time series?
2. What are the common reasons for rejection of Austudy applications?
3. Has the proportion of full-time students applying for Austudy and being rejected increased over the last 5 years? If so, for what reason?
4. With regard to extending income support to some coursework masters students, how was the \$43.3 million over 4 years funding figure calculated?
5. What criteria will determine the eligibility of coursework masters programs for which this income support measure will be available?
6. Do you have estimates at this point in time of the number of coursework masters programs that will be eligible for income support?
7. Can you indicate at this stage which disciplines are expected to be included in this scheme, and at which institutions?
8. What is the Government's estimate of the number of individual students enrolled in coursework masters programs who will be eligible for income support under this new measure?

#### **Answer:**

##### *Income Support*

1. The following table details the number of students receiving income support under the Austudy programme over a five year time series.

|  | 2001   | 2002   | 2003    | 2004   | 2005   | 2006   |
|--|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| Austudy recipients   | 40,797 | 39,867 | 37,467  | 33,400 | 30,007 | 27,728 |
| Tertiary students aged 25+   | 94,320 | 97,843 | 100,266 | 97,956 | 98,828 | na     |
| Austudy recipients as a proportion of all tertiary students aged 25+ | 43.3%  | 40.7%  | 37.4%   | 34.1%  | 30.4%  | na     |

Note: These are Centrelink point-in-time data as at 30 June each year.

- 2-3. Data on rejections of Austudy applications have been requested from Centrelink and this information will be provided once this becomes available.

4. The estimated cost of \$43.3 million over four years was calculated based on indicative enrolments in masters courses, estimated take-up rates and estimates of average benefits paid.
5. This measure will extend Youth Allowance and Austudy to students enrolled in an approved masters by coursework programme, where it is required for entry to a profession, or where it is the fastest pathway to professional entry, or where a university has diversified by restructuring its course delivery.

The department is currently developing Guidelines for implementation of the measure, including criteria to inform higher education providers' submissions for course approvals. The Guidelines will be refined in consultation with higher education providers and professional organisations. Once the Guidelines are finalised, the Minister will invite higher education providers to submit applications for specific courses for the Minister's approval. The Minister will determine approved courses and these will be listed under the "*Determination of Education Institutions and Courses*", sections 3(1) and 5d(1) of the *Student Assistance Act 1973*.

6. No estimates are available at this stage.
7. No. Courses will be considered for approval on the basis of the criteria detailed in the Department's guidelines, as indicated in 5 above.
8. The number of students eligible for income support under this measure is estimated at around 900 in 2008, increasing to around 1,500 in 2011. Actual take-up will be dependent on student demand and the number of courses submitted by higher education providers for approval under this measure.