

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

#### Outcome

#### DEST Question No. E159\_08

Senator Stott Despoja provided in writing.

#### Question:

1. How will the HEEF Board be selected?
2. What is the timeline for the establishment of this Board?
3. How will private donations to the HEEF be managed? For example, if someone bequeaths a portion of their estate to the HEEF, will they be able to nominate a particular use for it (eg, for a medical school and/or a facility at a particular university) or will the use of the funds be completely up to the Board?
4. Is it expected that the HEEF will eventually replace other Federal Government capital works/research facility funding programs for universities?
  - a. If so, what is the threshold for this transition to take place? Does the Government have a set value for the HEEF in mind before they wind down other programs? How will this decision be taken?
5. How will applications for the HEEF be assessed? What will be the key criteria on which applications will be judged?
6. Can you confirm that applicants for the HEEF will be regarded more highly if they have matching funds?
7. How will you correct for the obvious advantage this would give to the bigger, more established universities?
8. Will universities be able to use their existing endowment funds as matching funds?
9. My understanding is that universities will be invited, but not required, to roll their endowment funds into the HEEF – is this correct?
10. If universities do roll their endowment funds into the HEEF, will they then forfeit any control over how those funds are allocated?
11. Have the definitions of what constitute 'capital works' and 'research facilities' under the HEEF been established yet? If so, what are they?
12. What does a private university need to do to be listed as a Table B provider under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*?
13. Does the Government anticipate adding to the number of private universities considered to be eligible Table B providers?
14. What is the Government's timeline for each stage of establishing the HEEF?

#### Answer:

### *Higher Education Endowment Fund*

1. The HEEF Advisory Board will be selected by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, taking into account suggestions from four peak sector bodies – Universities Australia, University Chancellors Council, the National Academies Forum and the Business-Industry-Higher Education Collaboration Council.
2. The HEEF Advisory Board will be formally established following the passage of the enabling legislation, expected to be introduced in the Spring Sittings.
3. The Treasurer stated in his Budget night speech that members of the public donating to the HEEF will be able to nominate a specific institution or purpose for their donation. The Future Fund Board of Guardians and the HEEF Advisory Board, in consultation with the sector, will advise the Minister about the most appropriate way to manage philanthropic donations.
4. No decision has been taken in relation to existing funding programmes.
5. The HEEF Advisory Board, in consultation with the sector, will advise the Minister on the management of funding applications to the HEEF.
6. As per 5 above.
7. As per 5 above.
8. As per 5 above.
9. Yes.
10. As per 3 above.
11. No.
12. A private university would need first to be accredited to operate as a university in Australia in accordance with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes. Once so accredited, a private university would need to make a case to the Australian Government in support of being listed on Table B. As part of this process, an institution would be expected to be able to demonstrate compliance with all relevant requirements under HESA. These include: financial viability requirements; quality requirements; fairness requirements which include compliance with tuition assurance requirements and student grievance and review procedures; a range of compliance requirements with respect to the provision of information; and student contribution and fee requirements.
13. The Government is not presently considering any proposals by private universities seeking to be listed as Table B providers under HESA.
14. The HEEF legislation is currently being drafted and will be introduced in the Spring 2007 sittings of Parliament. Consultation with the higher education sector on the design of HEEF will be overseen by an Interim HEEF Advisory Board and will take place in the coming months. As indicated in the budget papers, the first funds will be expended in the 2008-09 financial year.