

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2008-09 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 3

DEEWR Question No. EW747-09

Senator Adams provided in writing.

Question

Indigenous Health Professions

How is the government working to improve the participation rate of Indigenous people in higher education and to attract Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to the health professions?

Answer

A number of measures are in place aimed at improving the Indigenous participation rate in higher education. These include the Indigenous Support Program, which assists higher education providers to meet the needs of their Indigenous students, as well as programs with more specific aims, such as the Indigenous Youth Mobility and Indigenous Youth Leadership Programs, and the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme – Tertiary Tuition. A number of higher education scholarships for Indigenous Australians, including Indigenous Access and Indigenous Enabling Scholarships for students, and the Indigenous Staff Scholarships, seek to improve the participation rate of Indigenous people in higher education.

A key priority of the Indigenous Higher Education Advisory Council (IHEAC) is to provide advice to Government to improve the participation of Indigenous people in higher education. This will also be addressed by the current Review of Australian Higher Education.

The Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP) consists of a number of specialised Indigenous employment programs, initiatives to stimulate Indigenous economic activity, and a range of measures designed to improve employment services and outcomes for Indigenous Australians. This can include the health profession.

To increase the number of Indigenous Australians in the health professions the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce Strategic Framework* was endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) in 2002. In March 2008, a new National Indigenous Health Workforce Training Plan was announced that will invest \$19 million over three years.