

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome/Agency 3

DEEWR Question No. EW0115_10

Senator Hanson-Young provided in writing.

Question

Responses to Bradley Review – Participation Rates

The government has accepted the recommendation of the Bradley review to implement participation targets of 40% of 25-34 year olds to have degree qualifications and 20% of undergraduate enrolments be low socio-economic status students. I note the target of 40% is to be met by 2025 rather than 2020 as recommended by Bradley.

The Bradley review also recommended a 10% increase for the base teaching and learning grants which the Government has not adopted.

- (a) Can these targets be met without the increase to base teaching and learning funding recommended by Bradley?
- (b) If so explain how?
- (c) Please identify the funding measures in the budget that will enable the higher education system to meet these targets?

Answer

- (a) The Government expects that the measures announced in the Budget will enable the sector to make substantial progress towards the attainment and participation ambitions that the Government has established. The Government will commission a review of the base funding levels for learning and teaching in higher education to ensure that funding levels remain internationally competitive and appropriate for the sector. This review will report in 2011.
- (b) The reforms announced as part of *Transforming Australia's Higher Education System* provide an additional \$1.5 billion over 4 years for university teaching and learning. These reforms include incentives for universities to grow and to increase enrolments of students from groups currently under represented in higher education. It will be possible to meet the Government's ambitions through increasing participation by such students (eg, low socio-economic status students, non-metropolitan students and former VET students). This would bolster participation rates significantly. In addition, government incentives for universities to improve the quality of teaching and learning will support improved retention and attainment.
- (c) Funding to directly support achievement of the attainment and participation ambitions over the period 2009-10 to 2012-13 includes:
 - \$491 million for the introduction of a student-centred funding system which removes the cap on enrolments to encourage growth in the sector;

- \$525 million for increased indexation (for teaching and learning funding) to provide funding certainty for institutions to support improved student-to-staff ratios and improved student engagement;
- \$206 million for new performance funding to provide an incentive for institutions to meet agreed targets in key areas such as improved teaching and learning quality and outcomes for students from low socio-economic backgrounds. This will help to improve retention and course completion rates;
- \$325 million for a student loading as an incentive for institutions to attract more students from low socio-economic backgrounds and improve the learning outcomes of those students;
- \$108 million for partnerships activities to link universities with low SES schools and vocational education and training providers.