

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

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

**Outcome:** 3

**DEEWR Question No. EW0324\_10**

Senator Cormann asked on 3 June 2009 DEEWR, Hansard page 31.

**Question**

*Languages at Tertiary Institutions*

**Senator CORMANN**—Essentially what I am interested to find out is whether the funding for language education at university level is part of cluster funding arrangements and what the implications are of that.

**Ms Paul**—Because ultimately universities determine their own course structures and so on - it is not controlled entirely by government - we may need to go to them to get some indication of how they have responded to that report. That is probably the best way to go about it. I am happy to do that, too. I will take that range of issues on notice.

**Answer**

The Australian Government funds universities for student places through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme (CGS). A university's overall CGS block grant is calculated on the basis of student load in each funding cluster. Each discipline is allocated to a funding cluster. Each equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) in the funding cluster that includes 'foreign languages' receives \$10,317 in funding in 2009.

Universities also receive a student contribution paid by students or by the Australian Government on their behalf if they receive HECS-HELP assistance. Universities determine a student contribution amount for each unit of study up to maximum amounts set out in the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. The maximum student contribution amount for foreign language units of study in 2009 is \$5,201 per EFTSL.

Universities are able to distribute CGS funding and their other sources of revenue, including student contributions, between courses and faculties having regard to their own cost structures.

A review of the funding clusters was undertaken in 2007. The number of funding clusters was reduced and changes were made to the funding for several disciplines with effect from 2008. Funding for foreign language units was not changed.

The Government announced in the 2009-10 Budget that it will commission a review of base funding levels for learning and teaching in higher education, including options for achieving a more rational and consistent sharing of costs between students and across discipline clusters, to report in 2011.

Information on recent projects by universities to collaborate in language education (an issue raised in the Group of Eight report) is provided in the response to QoN EW0323\_10.