

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Budget Estimates 2010-2011**

**Outcome 3 - Higher Education**

**DEEWR Question No.EW0040\_11**

**Senator Back provided in writing.**

**Question**

**CLOSURE OF FLYING SCHOOLS**

There have been a number of reported closures of flying schools due to the difficulties of gaining accreditation as VET FEE-HELP facilities or a failure to enter into partnerships with higher education providers. Are you aware of the closure of flying schools? Has the impact of these closures, in terms of restricting student pilot's ability to undertake practical training been considered? If it has, what has been the outcome of these considerations? Can you provide the supporting documentation? Has the Department or the Industry Skills Council or the Minister been approached by these companies. If so, by whom? Has any action been taken to review qualifying criteria for VET FEE-HELP to assist them in training more pilots? VET flying providers / schools claim this is a failure of the industry skills councils to acknowledge that we could be doing more to take advantage of the international demand for pilots as VET FEE-HELP accreditation remains inaccessible to many because it requires partnership with a tertiary education provider and the complexity of being able to become a CRICOS provider. Tertiary providers have an advantage in this. What is being done to address the needs of industry who have continued to consult with Government about training focused pilot education – which doesn't require a diploma / degree?

**Answer**

The Department is aware of the closure of some flying schools but has not been advised by Industry or the registered training organisations themselves this was due to them not being approved as a VET provider, able to offer VET FEE-HELP assistance, under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*(HESA).

All bodies corporate must demonstrate to the Minister (or their delegate) that they meet the requirements of clause 6 of Schedule 1A of HESA, before approval as a VET provider can be given. These requirements are not due to be reviewed at present.

Training organisations that deliver training and are registered in a ReformState or Territory are exempt from meeting the credit transfer requirement. Victoria is currently the only ReformState for the purposes of VET FEE-HELP.

VET FEE-HELP assistance is only available to students undertaking vocational education and training accredited diploma level and above courses.

The aviation industry, including pilot training, is highly regulated, by Australian regulators, the Civil Aviation Safety Authority and the Australian Defence Force as well as international regulators. VET qualifications for pilots are developed and maintained by the Transport and Logistics Industry Skills Council in consultation with aviation industry and regulators to ensure that they meet the sectors needs.