

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

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

Outcome 3 - Higher Education

DEEWR Question No.EW0438_12

Senator Mason asked on 1/06/2011, Hansard page 90.

Question

Maintenance Backlogs

Senator MASON: Did we touch on maintenance backlogs before in our earlier discussion? What evidence is there of the current capital investment backlog that exists in Australian universities? Is there any sort of data about the maintenance backlog?

Ms Paul: We have historically had some data, as I think we have discussed here before. I am not sure whether we have got anything up to date.

Dr Hart: Senator, we conduct an annual capital asset management survey plan with the universities, and one of the issues we try to identify is the backlog maintenance. I do not have with me the details of the status of that of all of the universities, but that provides the advice from the universities as to the status of their maintenance.

Senator MASON: Can the committee have a copy of that?

Dr Hart: We will have to take that on notice, yes.

Answer

Each calendar year, through the Capital Asset Management Survey (the survey), DEEWR collects estimates of the value of BacklogMaintenance from the 38 Higher Education Providers listed in Table A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*.

For the purpose of the survey, Backlog Maintenance is defined as maintenance that is necessary to prevent the deterioration of an asset or its function but which has not been carried out. Note that in some cases, Backlog Maintenance liabilities reported to DEEWR may also include refurbishments that are necessary due to a change in legislation or standards, or to meet current access codes. It may also include other outstanding deferred works such as heritage works.

The total Backlog Maintenance liability reported for 2009 (the latest available data) by 37 Higher Education Providers was \$2.5 billion (the Bachelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education did not provide a return). The Asset Replacement Value for non-residential buildings and associated infrastructure for the same Higher Education Providers was reported in the survey as \$37.8 billion. The average proportion of Backlog Maintenance to Asset Replacement Value across the sector was therefore 6.6%.