

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.3 – Assistance for skills and career development

DEST Question No. E475_04

Senator Crossin asked on 5 November 2003

Question:

Re The Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) - (i) what is the present situation re numbers doing this course? The waiting time? The number of hours of training available?

(ii) How were estimates of numbers who may want this course made and why were they so seriously underestimated that funding of (\$40.7 million) was grossly inadequate?

(iii) How many providers have had to close their doors due to funding problems with this programme?

Answer:

Language Literacy and Numeracy Programme (LLNP)

(i) For the period 1 July 2003 to 31 December 2003 there were 12,133 commencements for the programme.

To better manage the Programme and accommodate the increased level of demand, DEST introduced a number of programme changes in May 2003, including a mandatory 28 day delay between assessment and training for English language clients. This requirement was removed in January 2004 as there is now evidence that providers are managing client flows within their budget allocation.

Currently there is no mandatory waiting period for the programme. However under the programme guidelines Providers have the flexibility to delay client start times for training up to eight weeks after their pre-training assessment in order to reach optimal class sizes.

Individual clients can access up to 400 hours of training in each round of training and can access up to two rounds of training in a two year period. However, the Department of Education, Science and Training has asked Providers to initially enrol clients for only 200 hours. Once a client has completed around 190 hours of training the number of hours can be adjusted upwards, where the Provider believes that the client would benefit and the client has demonstrated a commitment to training.

(ii) The original estimates for programme demand were made on the basis of Centrelink registrations with an identified language or literacy need in October 2000, February 2001 and May 2001 and referral and placement data for the literacy, numeracy and advanced English for migrants programmes for the years 1999-2000 and 2000-01. The Request for Tender (RFT) for the LLNP included indicative estimates of training places by region for a total of 14,400 clients each year. The RFT also stated that the Department reserved the right to limit the level of LLNP business at any time.

(iii) No provider has ceased operation as a result of issues associated with this programme.