

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 1 and 2

Output Group: 1.2 Assistance for individuals including those with special needs and
2.5 Assistance for post school students including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E489_04

Senator Crossin asked 5 November 2003, EWRE Hansard page 96

Question:

1. Where is the review of the analysis of the Centrelink delivery of ABSTUDY?
2. Are the items you have listed to me in some sort of report format?

Answer:

ABSTUDY service delivery

1. The Department is conducting a collaborative business improvement project with Centrelink, focused on improving ABSTUDY services delivery. This work is continuing.
2. A progress report on the joint project is outlined below:
 - a. The implementation of a communication strategy to promote ABSTUDY, which includes targeted information products, such as the ABSTUDY Guide (printed – for customers) and the *ABSTUDY Handbook* (e-published for institutions) will commence in late 2003;
 - b. A new form has been developed for claiming incidentals and part time study which will simplify access to this benefit, as well as plans to review and improve other forms during 2004;
 - c. Plans are well advanced to develop stronger partnerships with stakeholders, including opportunities for them to identify, influence and contribute to service delivery initiatives through participation in forums and workshops;
 - d. An ABSTUDY debt prevention and management strategy is being developed that aims to reduce the incidence of preventable customer debt and have debt prevention responsibility and accountability combined into 'mainstream' customer servicing;
 - e. A new simplified ABSTUDY e-policy manual which can be accessed via the Internet, will be launched during December 2003. It will be supported by updates to Centrelink's *e-Reference* product (a support tool for Centrelink staff);
 - f. A comprehensive ABSTUDY training strategy for Centrelink staff has been developed; and
 - g. Management information for ongoing performance monitoring and programme evaluation is undergoing continuous improvement.