

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.5 Assistance with post school students including those with special needs.

DEST Question No. E690_04

Senator Stott Despoja asked on 17 November 2003

Question:

1. One of the Government's stated reasons for closing this Scheme [the Student Financial Supplement Scheme] is that commercial loan packages are now readily available to students. Has the Government done any research on this, and if so, what were the findings?
2. Did the Government consult students before deciding to close down the scheme, and if so, what were the findings?
3. Is the Government planning on increasing student income support payments or introducing an additional payment if it succeeds in closing the scheme?
4. Would the Government consider supporting an amendment to this Bill, to ensure that current students are able to continue to receive the supplement until the end of their course?

Answer:

Student Financial Supplement Scheme (SFSS)

The Department of Family and Community Services has provided the following response:

1. As part of the Government's consideration of the future of the Scheme, analysis of loans offered by financial institutions and student organisations was conducted. This found that many universities provide low or nil interest loans to their students and that financial organisations were providing a range of commercial products for the student market.
2. Any research or consultation results are internal working documents and accordingly cannot be disclosed.
3. No.
4. No.