EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
2005-2006 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 2
Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for Higher Education

DEST Question No. E682_06

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

Access Economics was contracted to conduct an independent review of the methodology of the assessment model used by DEST – their major finding in their 28 April 2005 report was that:

> *"Access Economics does not consider the results obtained from the DEST methodology to be robust."* (p. 59, *Review of Higher Education Outcome Performance Indicators*)

a)   What was DEST's response to the recommendations of Access Economics' Report: *Review of Higher Education Outcome Performance Indicators*, including its recommendations on the assessment model?
b)   Did DEST amend the assessment model between 28 April 2005 and 13 August when the results were released?

Answer:

Access Economics' Report: Review of Higher Education Outcome Performance Indicators

a)   The Department has addressed the major changes recommended by Access Economics for the data used in the 2006 allocation of the Fund. Changes that were adopted include:

(i)   changing variable definitions, particularly for student satisfaction items where the Department now makes full use of five categories of satisfaction rather than converting the five to two categories and therefore losing some of the richness of the data; and
(ii) the use of a more sophisticated regression analysis tool "ordered probit" to analyse certain indicators (attrition, the Graduate Destination Survey full time employment and further full time study data, and the Course Experience Questionnaire overall satisfaction, good teaching and generic skills indicators).

This means that of the suggested changes to methodology:
- all the "suggested changes" to the Course Experience Questionnaire items have been adopted;
- all of the "model considerations" have been implemented, and
- all of the changes that would have a "major impact of change on the output result" have been implemented.

b)   Yes.