

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.1 – Funding for vocational education and training

DEST Question No. E807_06

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

In a letter to State and Territory Ministers dated 17 August 2005 Ministers Nelson and Hardgrave said that there would be

- (i) a National Review of VET Fees; and this would include
- (ii) a review of resourcing for VET

In relation to each of these reviews:

- (a) What are the terms of reference?
- (b) Who will perform the review?
- (c) Will the review be independent of DEST?
- (d) What is the total cost?
- (e) What is the timeframe for reporting?
- (f) Will the report be made public?

Answer:

VET Resourcing Review

The Ministers' letter dated 17 November 2005 refers to paragraph 38 of the *Commonwealth-State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce*. It states that Australian, State and Territory governments commit to participating in specified Strategic National Initiatives over the life of the Agreement, including a review of resourcing arrangements for vocational and technical education.

- (a) The Agreement specifies that the review, which will be a single review, will encompass the following:
 - 1) to identify and model the impact of various policy drivers on demand for VET;
 - 2) to review the balance of public and private investment in VET; and
 - 3) to review fees policies to ensure more equitable access to VET and to minimise the impact of any fees changes.

The final terms of reference and work plan will be agreed by the National Senior Officials Committee (NSOC).

- (b) NSOC has established an Action Group to progress the VET Resourcing review, chaired by Queensland.

The Action Group may draw on the expertise of others, including engaging consultant(s), as it sees fit within the final approved terms of reference and budgetary limitations.

- (c) All jurisdictions are members of the Action Group. There is also an industry representative and a provider representative. The Australian Government, represented by DEST, will be one member of the Action Group.
- (d) Funding for the initial operation of the Action Group will be provided from Strategic National Initiatives funds up to a maximum of \$50,000. Additional funds may be requested by the Action Group following its report in June 2006.

Individual jurisdictions will meet the costs associated with membership of the Action Group (including travel and accommodation). Queensland will provide the venue for face to face meetings and meet catering expenses. The industry representative from a peak body will be asked to meet travel and accommodation costs, but will be assisted if necessary. The private provider representative on the Action Group will be assisted with the costs of attending meetings.

The secretariat function for the Action Group will be provided and funded by the Queensland Department of Employment and Training.

The Chair will be responsible for approving all Action Group costs in line with the approved budget.

- (e) The Action Group has been established until December 2006. It is proposed that the Action Group will provide a progress report in February 2006 and a final report on the review of research and the critical information gaps in June 2006.

If further work is to be undertaken, NSOC will determine a subsequent reporting timetable.

- (f) The NSOC will provide any report to the Ministerial Council for Vocational and Technical Education. Whether any report is made public will be a matter for Ministers to determine.