

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1 and 2
Output Group: 1.2 Assistance for individuals including those with special needs
2.5 Assistance for post-school students including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E711_07

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

DEST Annual Report 2005-06 p94 shows a decline in the number of students in receipt of Abstudy-tertiary. What is the reason for this decline? Is the decline geographically based? Please provide Abstudy-tertiary recipients by State and Territory for the years since 1996.

Answer:

ABSTUDY

As with all the Australian Government student income support programmes, ABSTUDY is targeted at those recipients who are the most in need. The ABSTUDY scheme is demand driven and no eligible applicant is denied access. There are many influences on an Indigenous person's decision to participate in education and training. National trends are the result of the interplay of often very different regional and local factors.

The 'Review into the impact of ABSTUDY policy changes that came into effect in 2000' reported that the divergence between growth in continuing enrolments and the decline in ABSTUDY tertiary recipients from about 1999 may mean that those Indigenous students with a higher probability of continuing their studies have become more able to draw upon financial resources, perhaps from supportive families or from employment, and therefore have less need for ABSTUDY. So too, as Indigenous families become more financially prosperous, the need for ABSTUDY reduces.

Data on the number of ABSTUDY tertiary recipients by State and Territory for each year for 2000 to 2005 is provided in the following table. Please note that Centrelink's IT system to administer ABSTUDY was developed in 1999 and hence readily accessible ABSTUDY data exist only from 2000 onwards. Collection of ABSTUDY data prior to this period would require significant re-direction of Departmental resources.

State/Territory (a)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
New South Wales	6,225	7,249	7,111	7,088	6,569	6,153
Victoria	1,355	1,417	1,353	1,262	1,090	1,112
Queensland	4,585	4,956	4,795	4,955	4,642	4,384
South Australia	2,078	2,210	2,275	2,122	1,852	1,601
Western Australia	3,816	4,362	4,016	3,556	3,390	2,953
Tasmania	504	566	562	492	444	406
Northern Territory	2,083	1,938	1,884	1,943	1,907	1,606
Australian Capital Territory	132	166	138	146	157	148

(a) Home State/Territory of recipient

Source: Centrelink data