

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome **4**

DEEWR Question No. EW0353_10

Senator Mason asked on 4 June 2009, EEWR Hansard page 25.

Question

Youth Allowance and Higher Education Students not living at home.

Senator Mason – I did not mean they were being press-ganged, but to engage in tertiary study they are forced to leave home because there is no university nearby.

Ms Paul – Okay. I am not sure whether we have that figure.

Dr Morehead – At the moment there are around 122,000 students receiving the Youth Allowance (student) and in higher education.

(Q a) Senator Mason – All right. Do we know how many are not living at home?

Dr Morehead – I'll see if I have that.

Ms Paul – That will not give you the answer to the question. It will say how many are not living at home, but it will not say whether they had to leave.

Senator Mason – I know, but there are two parts, sorry. I admit that the second question is a difficult one to answer; I accept that.

Dr Morehead – I'll take that one on notice

(Q b) Senator Nash – If you are taking that on notice, could you find out if you have any regional breakdown of those numbers, and if so, could you include that in your response?

Answer

(a) According to Centrelink administrative data, as at 24 April 2009, there were 122 103 higher education students receiving Youth Allowance (including both dependent and independent recipients). Of these students, 63 464 (or 52 percent) were paid at the living 'away from home' rate of payment, with around 29 per cent of those receiving the 'away from home' rate coming from areas outside the major cities.

For dependent students to receive the 'away from home' rate they must need to live away from the parental home for the purpose of undertaking their course of education. In assessing a student's circumstances, Centrelink needs to be assured that the student satisfies the 'reasonable distance' rules which require the claimant to travel by public transport for more than 90 minutes each way from their parental home to their educational institution. Time taken in travelling includes the walking and waiting times involved with using the public transport and consideration of the absence of appropriate public transport is also taken into account. It is not possible to determine whether independent students who live away home are required to do so for study purposes, or simply chose to do so.

(b) Student income support recipients are more likely to live away from home if they live outside metropolitan areas. According to the Centrelink administrative data, of the higher education students who received a Youth Allowance payment, 52 per cent qualified for an

'away from home' full or part payment of Youth Allowance (YA). Of those higher education students who recorded a home address:

- 48 per cent from a major city received the away from home rate of payment;
- 62 per cent from an inner regional area received the away from home rate of payment;
- 72 per cent from an outer regional area received the away from home rate of payment;
- 80 per cent from a remote area received the away from home rate of payment; and
- 78 per cent from a very remote area received the away from home rate of payment.

When interpreting these data it is necessary to consider that the home address provided by student income support recipients may not indicate their parents' address in all cases.

* The above analysis groups the post codes of student income support recipients according to the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) which measures the remoteness of a point based on the physical road distance to the nearest Urban Centre in each of five size classes - major city, inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote.