

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 1.10 Working Age Payments

Question No: SQ17-000060

Topic: Education Supplement

Hansard page: 82

Senator Murray Watt asked:

What is the policy rationale to remove the pensioner education supplement?

Answer:

Since the introduction of the Pensioner Education Supplement (PES), there have been a number of policy changes which provide more targeted support and financial assistance to income support recipients wishing to study. Ceasing payment of PES would deliver savings by removing duplicate financial assistance available to income support recipients for similar purposes, i.e. assistance with some of the costs associated with study.

In particular, changes to the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) (now incorporated into HELP – the Higher Education Loan Program) have given students access to more financial support, such as additional loans to assist with the payment of student services and amenities fees.

The removal of the PES is also consistent with the simplification of the income support system.