

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice
Budget Estimates May 2017
Communications Portfolio
Department of Communications and the Arts

Question No: 194

Program 2.1

Hansard Ref: Page 51, 25/05/2017

Topic: Inter-departmental Committees

Senator Kakoschke-Moore, Skye asked:

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Did these interdepartmental committees exist at the time the government was putting together its changes to VET FEE-HELP and now the VET Student Loans?

Ms Basser: I am not aware.

Mr Eccles: That is before my time. I would need to check.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: I am just a bit concerned because in response to my question where I asked, 'Was the department asked to contribute to the changes that were being made to the eligible courses?', the answer was no.

Ms Basser: No.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: That raises a flag with me, particularly if there are interdepartmental committees taking place and yet you still were not afforded the opportunity to provide input into the removal of arts courses from these eligible courses.

Ms Basser: I think the engagement has happened post the announcement and, as I said, they are now very engaged with us and keen to understand the issues.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Is that an optimal way of doing things, to engage with you after the decision has been made?

Dr Smith: We could take that on notice. I think that is my recollection as well, but perhaps we should just take it on notice.

Answer:

Discussions between the Department and the Department of Education on the reforms to VET are ongoing and productive, especially in the context of the Department of Education's current public review. Further questions should be directed to that Department.