

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000884

Senator Collins, Jacinta provided in writing

Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) - advice

Question

Has the Department developed, commissioned or received advice or modelling about the long term financial viability of the HELP (Higher Education Loan Program) scheme? If advice was prepared outside the department, which firm or organisation produced this advice?

Answer

The Department of Education and Training regularly monitors the sustainability of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) and routinely publishes financial information and key performance indicators in its Portfolio Budget Statements and annual reports. This information includes the nominal and fair value of the HELP debt and expenses to the Government in providing these loans. The performance indicators also report on the proportion of new debt not expected to be repaid, average number of years to repay debt and the average amount of outstanding debt. These estimates are predominantly undertaken in the department, but rely on advice from the Australian Taxation Office and the Australian Government Actuary.

The Government has released a policy options paper *Driving Innovation, Fairness and Excellence in Australian Higher Education* to facilitate discussion about the future of higher education in Australia, which canvasses a range of options to improve the sustainability of HELP.