

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment - Education

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2013-2014**

Cross Portfolio

Department of Education Question No. ED0334_14

Senator Ludwig provided in writing.

Question

Briefings for other parties

1. Have any briefings and/or provision of information been provided to Non-Government parties other than the Australian Labor Party?
If yes, please include:
 - a. How are briefings requests commissioned?
 - b. What briefings have been undertaken? Provide details and a copy of each briefing.
 - c. Provide details of what information has been provided and a copy of the information.
 - d. Have any briefings request been unable to proceed? If yes, provide details of what the requests were and why it could not proceed.
 - e. How long is spent preparing and undertaking briefings/information requests for the Independents? How many staff are involved and how many hours? Provide a breakdown for each employment classification.
 - f. Which Non-Government Parties or Independents, excluding the Australian Labor Party have requested briefings and/or information?

Answer

1. Yes, one.
 - a. Briefing requests may occur from any number of sources. In this instance, the inquiry was initiated as an FOI request to the Australian Tax Office (ATO). As data requests of this nature are routinely responded to, the FOI request was withdrawn and the ATO referred the request to the department.
 - b. A standard data request. A copy of the information provided is attached.
 - c. See attached copy.
 - d. No
 - e. Staff effort in responding to briefing requests of this nature is not collected systematically. The Department deals with a large volume of routine requests for data and other general information, but does not systematically collect information on the political or party affiliations of the requesting individuals and organisations.
 - f. Family First (SA)



Data Request Response

Requestor: Rikki Lambert, Media Liaison, Senior Legal and Policy Advisor,
FAMILY FIRST PARTY (SA)
Date query sent: 3 January
Deadline for Response:

In individual sets for the 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years, for details of:

- (1) the number of persons with a South Australian place of residence ('South Australians') who have HECS Debts, and separately have HELP Debts (and the total HECS debt and total HELP debt owed by those persons as a group in that financial year);
- (2) the amount repaid by South Australians in HECS and HELP debts respectively in that financial year;
- (3) the total number of instances and total dollar amount of South Australians' HECS and HELP debts written off in that financial year;
- (4) the total number of South Australians who made their final HECS repayment during that financial year;
- (5) the total number, in each of the four employment categories described at this page, of South Australians who were participants in the HECS-HELP benefit program (and the ATO are at liberty to explain in the Determination how many Postcodes / regions were included during that Financial Year to explain movements in the data);
- (6) the number of persons with an Australian place of residence (including South Australians) ('Australians') who have HECS Debts, and separately have HELP Debts (and the total HECS debt and total HELP debt owed by those persons as a group in that financial year);
- (7) the amount repaid by Australians in HECS and HELP debts respectively in that financial year;
- (8) the total number of instances and total dollar amount of Australians' HECS and HELP debts written off in that financial year;
- (9) the total number of Australians who made their final HECS repayment during that financial year;
- (10) the total number, in each of the four employment categories described at this page, of Australians who were participants in the HECS-HELP benefit program (and the ATO are at liberty to explain in the Determination how many Postcodes / regions were included during that Financial Year to explain movements in the data);

Response

As advised, the Department is only able to provide information in respect of a limited number of the above items. Below is a response to items 1,6,7 and 10. Information in response to the other items is not currently in existence and would require a significant investment of time and resources to produce.



Response 1

Number of HELP debtors with a South Australian place of residence and total debt owed

Year	Number of debtors - SA	Estimated Total Debt Amount - SA (\$ billion)
2009-10	102,571	1.4
2010-11	109,636	1.6
2011-12	116,407	1.8
2012-13	124,998	2.0

Note: HELP debts incurred under each of the different HELP schemes form part of a person's accumulated HELP debt and are not separately identifiable by individual scheme. The table above, and subsequent tables below, therefore do not separately identify HECS-HELP debt.

Response 6

Number of HELP debtors nationally and total debt owed

Year	Number of debtors - Australia	Estimated Total Debt Amount - Australia (\$ billion)	Estimated Fair Value of Debt - Australia (\$ billion)
2009-10	1,461,772	20.4	13.7
2010-11	1,567,100	23.0	15.6
2011-12	1,680,700	26.3	19.4
2012-13	1,823,288	30.1	21.7

Note: The total debt amount reflects the outstanding HELP debt balance. HELP debts are only recovered from persons who have a capacity to repay. The Commonwealth does not expect to recover the total debt. The amount that the Commonwealth expects to recover is the fair value and this is the amount published in the Australian Government Budget Financial Statements.

Response 7

Amount of HELP debt repaid by Australians

Year	Total amount repaid (\$ billion)
2009-10	1.4
2010-11	1.5
2011-12	1.7
2012-13	1.8

Response 10

Total number of HECS-HELP Benefit recipients

Year	Maths and Science	Early Childhood	Nursing	Education
2009-10	24	43	0	0
2010-11	208	184	113	58
2011-12	623	162	947	714
2012-13	1,279	384	3,021	2,536