SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-10

Outcome 4

DEEWR Question No. EW0352_10

Senator Hanson-Young asked on 3 June 2009, EEWR Hansard page 83.

Question

Regional and rural students who qualify for YA through workforce participation.

Senator Hanson-Young —What I am particularly interested in, though, are the figures on students from, say, regional and rural areas who have used the workplace participation criteria to qualify for Youth Allowance. How do we know what type of impact, positive or negative, this will have on those students if we do not have that data to say, 'These are the criteria the students use to qualify'? I was in regional South Australia last week talking to teachers and principals about this. The principal from Loxton High School said that 70 per cent of his year 12 graduates, which I thought was a significantly high number, take the gap year to qualify for the independent rate. That is just one example that one teacher has aggregated.

Ms Paul—Why don't we take that on notice? I am trying to pin some of that down. We have to ask Centrelink, but we will try to work out the number of young people those particular criteria affect or the reason for eligibility and where they come from or whatever. It is quite different.

Answer

Analysis of Centrelink administrative data on the home addresses recorded for young people who established their independence under the workforce participation criterion and were granted Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY from the period April 2008 to April 2009 suggests that:

- 70 percent lived in major cities;
- 21 percent lived in inner regional Australia;
- 8 percent lived in outer regional Australia; and
- the remaining 1 percent lived in remote or very remote Australia or did not have a post code recorded.*

It is expected that this geographic distribution would be broadly representative of the geographic location of people affected by the change to the workforce participation criterion commencing from 1 January 2010.

* The above analysis groups the post codes of Youth Allowance recipients who established their independence through the workforce participation criterion 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. When interpreting these data it is necessary to consider that the home address provided by an independent Youth Allowance recipient may not indicate their parents' address in all cases.