



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE

REPORT BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE
AND TRAINING ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07

RECOMMENDATION 1

That the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations include information in its Annual Report on the number and timeliness of responses to questions taken from committees of the Parliament outside of questions taken in Senate Estimates sessions.

RESPONSE

The department includes information in its Annual Report that represents an indicative level of parliamentary activity, to the extent that such activity is relevant to its overall outputs and outcomes. Typically, the department calculates this on the basis of the number of items handled, in comparison to past demand levels.

Certain parliamentary activities lend themselves to the recording of achieved outputs. Data relating to items of ministerial correspondence, ministerial briefings, Parliamentary Questions, and Questions on Notice from Senate Estimates hearings provide the most suitable representation of the department's overall parliamentary activity. These activities tend to have an ongoing nature, rather than being ad hoc or occasional.

The committee's observations regarding the department's responsiveness in providing information to the Review offer feedback on the department's performance. In this context, the department will work to improve its workflow monitoring and reporting processes to provide more timely responses to all committees of the Parliament in future.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, in consultation with the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) and stakeholders, ensure that provision is made to capture and incorporate private sector vocational education and training data into NCVER analysis.

RESPONSE

The Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education (MCVTE) has agreed to the development of a new National VET Data Strategy and has asked Senior Officials to consider how to access information on privately funded VET activity delivered by private providers. This work is now underway and includes representatives from the states and territories.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations consult with the Australian Council of Deans of Science, the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Council of Educational Research and other relevant stakeholders in relation to improving collection and aggregation of data on university enrolments and completions that will provide trend information for narrow areas of enabling sciences such as physical, mathematical and chemical sciences.

RESPONSE

The Higher Education Student Data Collection reflects university course and unit structures which do not generally identify specific streams of science prior to completion. We acknowledge the limitation this causes when reporting on enrolment trends in narrow fields of education. The department will consult with Australian Council of Deans of Science, the Australian Academy of Science, the Australian Council of Educational Research and other relevant stakeholders to explore options for providing trend information for narrower areas of the enabling sciences.