

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department/Agency:** Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet  
**Outcome/Program:** Outcome 2: Indigenous  
**Topic:** Proposed Changes to Higher Education Modelling

**Senator:** Kakoschke-Moore

**Question reference number:** 98

**Type of question:** FPA Friday 26 May 2017, page 48

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** 7 July 2017

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: I think what has been put to me is not so much that they are having face-to-face tutorials online but that there are programs that are being used that are only giving very generic feedback rather than the highly specialised and individualised feedback that was available when face-to-face tutoring was happening as a matter of course through this funding. I will have a closer look through those guidelines before I speak to you again in a few months time.

I want to go back to the conversations that you had with the department of education around the proposed changes to higher education. I understand that there were some conversations and that perhaps some advice was given, and I hope that on notice you might be able to provide me with some details of that advice. I would also like to know if you have conducted any modelling about the proposed changes. Was any modelling conducted?

Ms Hefren-Webb: We did not conduct any direct modelling, no.

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Were you requested to?

Ms Hefren-Webb: Given that this was a cabinet proposal brought forward by another department, it would be unusual for us to be requested to do so. I do not recall any such request.

...

Senator KAKOSCHKE-MOORE: Based on that quite impressive amount of information you hold about Indigenous tertiary students, could you on notice perhaps provide me with some information about how these changes will impact tertiary students?

Ms Hefren-Webb: We could provide you with information about the demographic characteristics, but I do not know that we necessarily could provide advice about exact impacts. But we will have a look at what we can provide.

**Answer:**

In 2015, students who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people comprised 1.1 per cent of all enrolments in 2015 (up 7.1 per cent from 2014 to 16,136 students) and 1.3 per cent of commencements (up 6.8 per cent from 2014 to 7,298). Of the total enrolments, 10,599 were females and 5,537 were males.

In 2015, there were:

- 6,921 Indigenous students from regional and remote areas;
- 4,995 Indigenous students from Low Socio-Economic Status areas; and
- 1,679 Indigenous students that identify they have a disability.

The main fields of study in which Indigenous students were enrolled were Society and Culture (5,318 students, or 33.0 per cent of all Indigenous students); followed by Health (3,167 students or 19.6 per cent); and Education (2,568 students or 15.9 per cent). The top three levels of study for Indigenous students in 2015 were Bachelor's pass (10,882 students or 67.4 per cent); Enabling (1,317 students or 8.2 per cent ); and Masters by Coursework (1,173 students or 7.3 per cent).

Further information is available on the Department of Education and Training's webpage: <https://www.education.gov.au/student-data>. The Department of Education and Training also accepts requests for specific data.