

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016, 1 - 2 June 2015

Ref No: SQ15-000298

OUTCOME: 8 - Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: Medical Scholarships

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

Medical Rural Bonded Scholarships (MRBS)

- a) How many graduates were eligible to begin their MRBS Return of Service and how many actually began completing it?
- b) With such a poor continuation rate, has the government considered releasing all current students and graduate from their contracts given this extremely poor retention program?

Answer:

- a) As at 11 May 2015, there were 108 participants completing a return of service obligation. An additional 36 vocationally-qualified doctors were 'eligible', but yet to commence their return of service. Another 1,155 participants are expected to commence a return of service once they complete medical training and become 'eligible' to undertake the return of service.
- b) All participants of the MRBS scheme receive, or have received, a generous scholarship in exchange for a commitment to work in regional, rural or remote Australia once they become vocationally-qualified doctors. There is no intention to release current students and graduates from their commitments.