

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-001002

OUTCOME: 2 - Health Access and Support Services

Topic: Health Work Force Scholarship Program

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Di Natale, Richard

Question:

What will the savings be under the new Health Work Force Scholarship Program (HWSP) – which is approximately \$11m per year over 3 years compared with the previous programs, the Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS) and the Rural Australian Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS)?

Answer:

Funding for historical programs and the new Health Workforce Scholarship Program (HWSP) are not directly comparable. They have differing funding structures, objectives and approaches. The Nursing and Allied Health Scholarship and Support Scheme (NAHSSS) and the Rural Australian Medical Undergraduate Scholarship (RAMUS) primarily supported the supply of health professionals through undergraduate scholarship support.

From 2012-13 to 2014-15, administrators of the NAHSSS and RAMUS programs reported expenditure on scholarships of almost \$91.5 million.

Program	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Total
NAHSSS (SARRAH)	\$9,148,701	\$10,399,939	\$11,051,878	\$30,600,518
NAHSSS (ACN)	\$15,504,360	\$13,703,124	\$13,871,789	\$43,079,273
RAMUS	\$5,835,000	\$5,950,000	\$6,030,000	\$17,815,000

Note: Dollar values only relate to scholarship payments, not other support payments or administrative funds, figures are inclusive of GST.

The HWSP focuses support on up-skilling, capacity building, and retention activities for the existing health workforce. Support may be directed to health professionals already working in areas experiencing a shortage of services, or to those who are willing to provide services in areas of shortage following the completion of their further training. Financial support will make upskilling and capacity building training more accessible and attractive to health professionals who are already working in areas that are experiencing a lack of services, and will bring professional costs more in line with their urban counterparts.