

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2010-2011, 20 October 2010

Question: E10-103

OUTCOME 12: Health Workforce Capacity

Topic: INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Hansard Page: CA 114

Senator Adams asked:

What is the rate of completion for Indigenous health students in Australian universities? Are most of them actually completing, not dropping out?

Answer:

The Department of Health and Ageing keeps no specific data on the rate of completion for Indigenous medical and other health students in Australian universities. This is primarily the responsibility of the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). However, DEEWR has advised it does not track individual Indigenous students from first enrolment to completions as students may drop out, some may defer, some may go to another university, and some may complete.

Medical students supported under the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship Scheme provide some indication of completion rates. Of the total of 98 Scholarships awarded, 57 are active, 26 have completed and 15 have withdrawn - this translates to 15% of those students who commenced studies in Medicine had withdrawn. The table at figure 1 below, shows completion and withdrawal rates by year.

Figure 1: Number of completed and withdrawn medicine recipients by year and cohort

SCHOLARSHIP	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
Completed	0	2	3	2	3	3	7	6	0	26
Withdrawn	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	6	3	15

A few individual Universities provide only some indication of Indigenous completion rates, but these are aggregated across all degrees and show only final year completions. For example, the University of NSW Indigenous Education Statement 2010 indicates that in 2008 there were a total of 13 completions at the Bachelor Pass level (4628 non-Indigenous), and in 2009 there were 17 (4872 non-Indigenous). Also, these figures were not broken into discipline.